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GENERATIVE METAPHOR:

FILIATION AND THE DISEMBODIED FATHER IN

SHAKESPEARE AND JONSON

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by

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For Chris Bundrick. Every day I’m glad you didn’t let that car wreck distract you.

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FILIATION AND THE DISEMBODIED FATHER IN SHAKESPEARE AND JONSON

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This project shows how Jonson and Shakespeare represent dissatisfactions with filiation and paternity as discontents with other early modern discourses of cultural reproduction, and vice versa. Chapters on six plays analyze the father-child tie as it articulates sensitivities and hopes in remote arenas, from usury law to mourning rites, humanism to Judaism, witchcraft to visions of heaven. In every play, the father is disembodied. He is dead, invisible, physically separated from his child, or represented in consistently incorporeal terms. In its very formlessness, the vision of paternity as abstraction is what makes it such a flexible metaphor for Renaissance attitudes to so many different forms of cultural cohesion and replication.

The Shakespeare plays treat the somatic gulf with ambivalence. For Shakespeare, who ultimately rejects a world beyond the impermanent material one, incorporeality is both the father's prestige and his punishment. But for Jonson, the desomatization more often indicates paternal privilege. Jonson wants filiation and fathering to counteract the progression of history, and since time destroys the concrete, abstraction and

disembodiment are necessary for the process to work. His plays initially envision a paternally imagined rule of law achieving permanence for those under it. But *Volpone* undermines *Every Man In His Humour*'s fantasy of law, and *The Staple of News* dismantles it still more. Ultimately, in *Staple*'s schematically represented father and son, a pair whose reunion allows them a courtroom triumph, Jonson resorts to an abstractly figured paternity itself to justify other abstractions, legal and literary.

As with law in Jonson, so for religion and the supernatural in Shakespeare. Shakespeare's body of work eventually renounces the religious faith whose representation it interweaves with portraits of children and fathers. It does so first in *Merchant*'s intimidating Judaism and hypocritical Christianity, then in *Twelfth Night*'s more subtly referenced Catholicism, mournful and aestheticized, and finally in *The Tempest*'s various abjurations. Monotheism vanishes altogether in the last play, replaced by a dead witch and multiple spirits and deities who do the bidding of a conjuror who plans to give them up. Both playwrights ultimately reduce their investment in other forms of cultural transmission in favor of more intimate parent-child structures, embodied or not.

Contents

Introduction

This project takes its title from a 1979 essay by the philosopher and social theorist Donald Schön. Schön's argument is a simple one: metaphors influence our responses even more than we realize, he writes. Migrating from one arena to another, even tacit analogies generate conceptual frameworks that outstrip the comparisons' original functions.[1] The relevant metaphors for this project are multiple. Plays by Jonson and Shakespeare treat paternity and filiation as representations of other kinds of reproduction and continuity, historical, religious, financial, and verbal. They also treat other kinds of reproduction and continuity as representations of paternity and filiation. And they ultimately present the father himself as a generative metaphor, both productive and oddly abstract. In all six plays this dissertation analyzes, the father is disembodied—represented in steadfastly incorporeal terms, physically separated from his child, dead, or sometimes mysteriously invisible to others. In the Jonson plays, as I argue, that desomatization indicates both masculine privilege and the child's reluctance to take on a paternal role. In either case, Jonson represents disembodiment as a state to be desired. The Shakespeare plays treat the somatic gulf with more ambivalence. For Shakespeare, paternal disembodiment is both the father's prestige and his punishment.

1. Donald A. Schön, "Generative Metaphor: A Perspective on Problem-Solving in Social Policy," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony, rev. 2nd ed., 137-163 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

"Non Sanz Droict," reads the device on Shakespeare's bright yellow coat of arms. Perhaps as little as two years later in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, the ridiculous Puntarvolo suggests to the equally ridiculous Sogliardo a similar motto, "Not without mustard."[2] The detail is generally taken as a jab at Shakespeare, of course.[3] Rendering the original's noble abstraction a humble condiment is *echt* Jonson, not only in its puncture of pomp, but also in its stance on paternity and filiation. He characterizes Sogliardo's paternal legacy as merely a bit of fluid. But this is perhaps more a mockery of Sogliardo than of Shakespeare, more earnest an approach to familial continuity than it seems. Jonson hardly scorns forefathers, nor does he scoff at legal and moral "right." What his work suggests, rather, is that ordinary *embodied* paternity, organic and material and impermanent, is insufficient. The Shakespeare plays I discuss in this dissertation initially suggest a similar unease with fatherly flesh. Where the end of Shakespeare's career involves a reconciliation with the father's body, though, Jonson's plays are consistent in venerating the abstraction that *Every Man Out*'s mustardy brand of filiation never manages.

Individual chapters examine the confluence of paternity and filiation with a variety of early modern issues not obviously related to either state. The vision of paternity as abstraction, in its very formlessness and disembodiment, is what makes it such a flexible metaphor—for religious and literary continuity in the first part of the

2. The phrase appears in at least two previous sources, Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Pennilesse* (1592) and an anecdote in a jest book, Anthony Copley's *Wits, Fittes, and Fancies* (1595).

3. See for example the discussion in Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Ungentle Shakespeare: Scenes from His Life* (London: Arden, 2001), 96-97, 120-22.

dissertation, which addresses *Twelfth Night* (c. 1602) and *Every Man in His Humour* (c. 1598, Folio revision c. 1612[4]); for uneasy proliferations of money and language in *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596) and *The Staple of News* (c. 1625), which comprise the second part; and for the supernatural and the divine in *The Tempest* (c. 1611) and *Volpone* (c. 1606), the subjects of the third and last part. In Shakespeare studies, the intersections of early modern father-child ties and other contemporary cultural domains such as mourning rites (*Twelfth Night*), usury (*The Merchant of Venice*), and magic (*The Tempest*) have been given at most sidelong glances. As for Jonson, critics have discussed the influence of New Comedy generational strife and examined his plays' depictions of paternity through a psychobiographical lens, but apart from a small number of studies of the poetry, few have written about the complexities of the representations of paternity and filiation in the texts themselves.[5] Jonson's proximity to Shakespeare and his occasionally fussy scholarship may have combined to shortchange his reputation as a playwright who can characterize and who can represent human relationships in ways that do not only serve explicit didactic purposes. In short, there's more room for close reading of the seemingly formulaic and quite successful early play *Every Man in His Humour*; of arguably the most canonical text of the Jonson oeuvre, *Volpone*; and of one of the least

4. According to Jonas Barish in *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 130.

5. Howard Marchitello (listed as Howard Marchitell) has written on paternity in Jonson ("Desire and Domination in *Volpone*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 31.2 [1991], 287-308), as has Gregory Chaplin ("'Divided Amongst Themselves': Collaboration and Anxiety in Jonson's *Volpone*," *ELH* 69 [2002], 57-81); Riggs' *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) reads the psychobiographical content of the plays, Ian Donaldson addresses Jonson's concern with imitation in several articles, and Stephen Booth analyzes fatherly emotions in Jonson's poetry in *Precious Nonsense* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

and latest, *The Staple of News*, which was Jonson's first stage play after ten years of masques and poetry only and Jonson's first extensive dramatic presentation of a father-son relationship since *Every Man In* some thirty years earlier.

The project looks at early, middle, and late plays of both dramatists. However, I will not pretend to offer a complete pattern of development for either writer, one that would be of use primarily for its biographical implications. Nor do I aspire to provide a comprehensive history of English father-child relationships from the 1590s to the 1620s. Instead, the chapters illuminate subpatterns within overarching historical narratives, alternative routes through the playwrights' bodies of work and through the early modern representations of paternity and filiation. Each of these comedies and the one romance possesses oddities that suggest the presence of more complex paternal themes than plot summaries might indicate. *Volpone*, which features only one actual father-child pair, the parent a minor character in terms of line count, repeatedly chimes with the word "father"—dozens of times in a variety of circumstances. Prospero, one of the most patriarchal of Shakespearean parents, speaks a language full of maternal imagery. *Merchant* shows two daughters circumventing paternal will but resounds with castration references that seem to have nothing to do with fathers and everything to do with lenders and Jews. In *Every Man in His Humour* and *The Staple of News*, fathers and sons insistently and confusingly bear the same name, and both plays combine this onomastic twinning with plot conflicts about the proper uses of language. And *Twelfth Night* starts and ends with dead fathers who may or may not have something to do with the play's

representation of forbidden Catholic rites. The breadth of the chapters' topics suggests Shakespeare's and Jonson's representation of the father-child relationship as perhaps the central one in early modern interactions, a connection constantly affecting and being affected by other cultural currents. Closer to the heart of this project, though, is the idea of the father *as* idea rather than as a specific, embodied person, and an exploration of some of the implications of rendering paternity an abstraction.

The Renaissance, along with the neoclassical period and the eighteenth century, interrupts the medieval and Victorian cults of motherhood and gainsays the tendency of many later psychoanalytic theorists, anthropologists, and their numerous cultural heirs to assign primacy to the mother's and not the father's influence on the child, and ultimately, on the adult.[6] Different childrearing customs across the centuries—apprenticeships, for example, among early moderns, and the factory- or office-worker fathers and homemaker-mothers in later periods—probably account for some of this contrast in family life and in literature.[7] Early moderns did *not* always see the physical connection between mother and child as stronger than that between father and child—sending

6. These psychoanalytic theorists include Lacan in "The Mirror Stage," Freud in his accounts of pre-oedipal development, and D. W. Winnicott in *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971); prominent anthropologists who define the nuclear family primarily by the existence of a lengthy and psychologically significant mother-child relationship include Talcott Parsons ("The Incest Taboo in Relation to Social Structure," in *The Family: Its Structures and Functions*, ed. Rose Laub Coser [New York: St. Martin's, 1974], 13-30, esp. 14.)

7. Susan Cahn's *Industry of Devotion: The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987) argues that by 1550 conduct literature emphasized the wife's function in caring for small children over her role as producer of goods or household manager. However, many Renaissance humanists and Protestant clergy opined thaft maternal nurture and education should stop at a very young age, to be replaced by male tuition, secular and spiritual. See Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), esp. 67-69.

children out to nurse was a widespread practice among the upper ranks, and widely read seventeenth-century texts such as Nicholas Culpeper's *The English Physitian* (1652) and Helkiah Crooke's *Microcosmographia* (1615) remind us that until the discovery of the ovum in the early nineteenth century, the mother was usually thought to provide only the necessary raw material for the conception and growth of an embryo, not the sort of specific, individuating contribution the father made. And several factors, including the decline of Catholicism and Maryolatry and the cult of virginity under Elizabeth, may have combined to diminish culturally perceived maternal power and increase culturally perceived paternal power. Lawrence Stone sees a Renaissance growth in paternalism that is fostered by the increasingly absolutist Tudor state.[8] The centrality to English Renaissance drama of the father-child tie may also originate in that tie's inherent ambiguity at a time when bloodlines were crucial for social standing. For early moderns, one *must* know who one's father is, and one *never* actually does. Peter Laslett notes that prosecutions of illegitimate births rose sharply in the 1570s to decrease only in the 1630s.[9] According to some anthropologists, a society's degree of intolerance for illegitimacy is positively correlated with the centrality of the father as mediator between family and society.[10] England may have been unusual among European countries in its emphasis on the father's power—at least one early modern observer saw English children

8. Lawrence Stone, "The Rise of the Nuclear Family in Early Modern England: The Patriarchal Stage," in *The Family in History*, ed. Charles E. Rosenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 13-57, 34.

9. *The World We Have Lost* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 132-178.

10. See for example Rose Laub Coser and Lewis A. Coser, "The Principle of Legitimacy and Its Patterned Infringement in Social Revolutions," in *The Family: Its Structures and Functions*, 94-106, 105.

as more deferential to their fathers than other European children.[11] The combination of urgency and uncertainty makes the father-child link a potent metaphor for any connection of emotional weight, as attested by the paternal metaphors that accompanied monarchy, literary ties, and even the alchemical process.

Project Rationale

For this topical study, why Shakespeare? And why Jonson, of whom it has been said that he is "smug, surly, superior, and sadistic—and those are his good qualities"?[12] Jonson's appeal is the strange charisma of judgment—of other writers, of people's use or misuse of language, of himself—and by extension, of his readers, who perhaps retain a puerile scholastic pleasure in being evaluated and found acceptable, particularly when others are not. We may not like Jonson, but we want the rare commodity of his approval nonetheless. This approval is part of what Jonson offered junior poets, too. His overt self-positioning as aesthetic and social mentor and father figure to the writers known sometimes as the Tribe of Ben and sometimes as the Sons of Ben is an invitation for his representations of filiation and fathering to be more closely examined than they have

11. Fynes Morrison, according to J. P. Cooper ("Patterns of Inheritance and Settlement by Great Landowners from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," in *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800*, ed. Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk, and E. P. Thompson [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976], 192-327, 296-7), notes that in England after 1300 and before the rise of the strict settlement in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries fathers had increased legal powers to control their children's marriages and to disinherit them, and hypothesizes that this authority was responsible for the children's unusually high deferentiality.

12. Doug Bruster, e-mail message to author, December 19, 2007.

been up to this point.[13] When a critic as insightful as Katharine Eisaman Maus can write that Jonson ignores reproductive sexuality in his comedies, a corrective is needed.[14] As for a reason to produce another study of Shakespeare, whose depictions of paternity have not precisely been neglected, my primary response is that the marvelously complex ties between fathers and children, and the various causes and effects of those ties, are central enough to Shakespearean drama and early modern culture to merit further treatment. The influential work of critics such as Janet Adelman, C. L. Barber, Harry Berger, Jr., Catherine Belsey, Coppélia Kahn, David Riggs, and Harold Bloom need not end conversation on the topic.[15] Gaps remain.

The work that most strongly inspires this project—Adelman's, Stanley Cavell's, and Kahn's—all centers on tragedy, whose social cachet persists more than two thousand years after the death of Aristotle.[16] But more is hidden behind the arras, and the six plays

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13. The precise date and origins of the phrases "Tribe of Ben" and "Sons of Ben" are unclear. "Tribe" dates at least to 1623, with Jonson's "An Epistle Answering to One That Asked to Be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben." A few years later, Thomas Randolph's "A Gratulatory to Mr. Ben Johnson for his Adopting of Him to be his Son" made the term more explicitly filial. The poem is from 1628 or later (D. H. Craig, *Ben Jonson: The Critical Heritage* [New York, Routledge, 1599-1798], 163.

One wonders if "sons" was a term preferred by Jonson's juniors but not by Jonson himself.

14. Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Facts of the Matter: Satiric and Ideal Economies in the Jonsonian Imagination," in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, ed. Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1991), 64-89, 85

15. Also see the work of Joel Fineman and Richard Wheeler; a more historicist treatment is Shannon Dobranski, who addresses *Merchant*'s absent father in relation to inheritance law, reading the absence as an indication of early modern resistance to gendered inheritance. See Shannon Prosser Dobranksi, "Absent Fathers in Shakespeare's Middle Comedies" (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2002).

16. See in particular Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest (New York and London: Routledge Press, 1992), and Coppélia Kahn, "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," rpt. in *Rewriting the Renaissance: the Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 33-49. Cavell's essay is this dissertation's disembodied father, inspiring its beginning but appearing nowhere in particular later. See Cavell, "The

addressed in this dissertation comprise one romance and five comedies. As for Jonson, the tragedies were even less popular in the seventeenth century than they are now, and that lack of cultural resonance is reason enough to exclude them from this study. Too, like the babbling revelations of a Tudor court fool, comedy's disposable grace is perhaps the most suitable genre for studying the sorts of quotidian tensions that were difficult for early moderns to address directly—the conflicts between same-sex desire and the mandate to reproduce, for example, as addressed in *Twelfth Night*; *Volpone*'s and *Every Man in His Humour*'s suggestion that institutional, symbolic fathers are superior to their biological models; *The Merchant of Venice*'s representation of dead fathers, literal and spiritual, as near-unbearable burdens; *The Staple of News*'s and *Every Man In*'s presentation of paternity as infantilizing; *The Tempest*'s, *Every Man In*'s, and *Volpone*'s dreams of male parthenogenesis. In several of the plays, the fantasy of the disembodied father is one of not reproducing. It is apocalyptic, a subtler version of the tragedies' world-ending visions. But the disembodiment also mimics eternity. And instead of identifying the primary emotional threat as fear of engulfment by the powerful mother, as Adelman's and Kahn's readings of Shakespeare do,[17] the dissertation suggests that Shakespeare's and Jonson's plays emerge from a world in which paternal disembodiment

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Avoidance of Love: A Reading of *King Lear*," in *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 39-123. The only thing missing from his reading (an uncharacteristic lapse, since many of his best insights come from taking characters' speeches at face value) is that Goneril and Regan are more or less telling the truth when they say how much they love Lear—a jealous, horrific love, but love nonetheless.

17. See Coppélia Kahn, *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981). Especially influential on Adelman and Kahn are Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* and Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise*.

is such a potent fantasy that it permeates any domain that involves replication or reproduction at all.

What, apart from acquaintance, do Shakespeare and Jonson have to do with each other? The project does not concentrate on mutual influence. The question has several answers, among them that these two playwrights are representative not just of what theatre in early modern England *was*, but of what the English Renaissance *is* to us today. This is the only pair of dramatists that combines early modern popularity and late modern canonicity to such a degree. While studying Jonson and Shakespeare again perpetuates that canonicity, perhaps undesirably, projects with even minor aspirations to cultural history should illuminate the traditional center as well as the unjustly neglected margins. That said, the chapter on *Staple* does make a foray into the canonical borderlands where a well-known dramatist wrote little-known plays. Jonas Barish once observed that as of the seventeenth century "the luckless Jonson was yoked to Shakespeare in an odious tandem from which two centuries of subsequent comment would scarcely suffice to extricate him."[18] It seems odd now that anyone would mistake one of these literary siblings for the other, or write on Jonson solely to elevate Shakespeare. Instead, their ability to occupy the same geographical and social places at the same times while providing such different reading experiences is what warrants a topical study's attention to the pair in tandem. Together, they provide a more thorough record than either offers separately. Their representations of paternity and filiation are hardly identical. Where they fall into

18. Quoted in Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and Jonson/Jonson and Shakespeare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 1-2.

alignment we can find compelling cultural narratives. They offer widely different representations of early modern experience—Shakespeare's, which often recalls the medieval world in its acceptance of mystery and profound acknowledgment of chaos, and Jonson's, whose systematizing neoclassicism and assiduous satire anticipates the Augustans. But both are creatures of the Renaissance, absorbed with continuity and the possibility—or impossibility—of rebirth. "He was not of an age, but for all time!" wrote Jonson of Shakespeare. The praise, apparently timeless in itself, appeared at the head of Shakespeare's 1623 first folio and was engraved in stone at the Folger Shakespeare Library more than three hundred years later.[19] Ian Donaldson writes of Shakespeare's consistent characterization as universal, transcendent; Jonson's main appeal, meanwhile, is relegated to a short chunk of history.[20] But this project will attempt to historicize universal Shakespeare and universalize historical Jonson. The Shakespeare chapters in particular examine specifically early modern aspects of filiation and paternity; the Jonson chapters offer readings more focused on cultural and psychological structures that have outlasted the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

19. Jonson, "To the Memory of My Beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us," in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ed. Hugh Maclean (New York: Norton, 1974), 85-88, line 43.

20. Ian Donaldson, "'Not of an Age': Jonson, Shakespeare, and the Verdicts of Posterity," in *Jonson's Magic Houses: Essays in Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 180-197. See 184, note 8, for a bibliography of primary and secondary sources that document and discuss Jonson's fall in critical reception and Shakespeare's rise.

Methodology

Different plays require different modes of analysis. That said, all of these chapters rely on close readings. This tactic might be out of place were the project to center on the plays as performances. However, Jonson's editing and publication of the 1616 Folio is a clear invitation to read the plays with the attention to verbal detail that one might otherwise reserve for poetry. And as Lukas Erne's *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* convincingly argues, Shakespeare too was deeply involved in his plays as printed texts rather than only as theatrical productions.[21] Character criticism, perhaps the dominant type of literary criticism from the eighteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century, is another mainstay of the readings to follow.[22] With the exception of *The Staple of News*, each of these plays contains representations of human beings that are psychologically realistic to one degree or another (more for Shakespeare, less for Jonson), and the complexities of those representations are intimately tied to the plays' representations of their broader social environments.

Related to character criticism in assuming fictional characters' interiority is psychoanalytic criticism. This project uses psychoanalytic materials in two ways. First,

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21. Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

22. Character criticism was dealt a near-crushing blow by L. C. Knights' "'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?': An Essay in the Theory and Practice of Shakespeare Criticism," reprinted in Knights, *Explorations: Essays in Criticism Mainly on the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (New York: George W. Stewart, 1947), 15-54, but it has since mostly recovered from its excesses. See Jessica Slights, "Rape and the Romanticization of Shakespeare's Miranda," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 41.2 (Spring 2001): 357-379, for a defense of character criticism and a discussion of recent practitioners.

some of Freud's work in particular functions here more as especially influential literary criticism than as broadly applicable theory. His arguments in "The Theme of the Three Caskets," for example, fit into this study as an important reading of *The Merchant of Venice* but not as a more general claim about the transhistorical nature of relationships between men and women. This is also true of work influenced by Freud, such as Adelman's. But occasionally I use Freudian ideas without the intermediary of literary criticism, especially in the chapters on *Merchant*, *The Staple of News*, and *The Tempest*. New Historicist objections to rampant abuse of psychoanalytic tenets have provided a useful reminder of the need to differentiate between late modern and early modern habits of perception. They have also offered an opportunity to show which psychic structures have straddled both periods. Many Freudian and post-Freudian theories assume social structures that privilege the nuclear family of parents and children in terms of living arrangements and expectations of mutual care and cathexis, that rely on inheritance as the primary mode of transferring wealth and rank, and that feature significant differences in status between individuals. These structures were as integral to early modern England as they were to Freud's Vienna (and as they are in most parts of the world today, for that matter). Too, as Shoshana Felman puts it, "literature . . . is the unconscious of psychoanalysis."[23] Freud's analyses were so permeated by Shakespeare that one might say they reveal more about early moderns than about his contemporaries.

23. "To Open the Question," in *Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading Otherwise*, ed. Shoshana Felman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 10.

Perhaps the dissertation's most important source of information external to the plays themselves and to numerous critical readings of them, though, is the work of historians of the early modern period: of the family (Ralph Houlbrooke, Lawrence Stone, Keith Wrightson, Alan Macfarlane, Linda Pollock), of mourning (Stone, Clare Gittings, David Cressy), of witchcraft (Deborah Willis, Diane Purkiss, Keith Thomas, Macfarlane), of gender (Amy Erickson, Thomas Laqueur, Laura Levine, Ian Maclean). Primary texts of early modern history such as medical manuals and diary entries also provide contemporary context. And finally, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century imaginative literature, particularly other plays and poems by Shakespeare and Jonson, offers the most relevant frame of reference for the writers' interests.

Part One: History and the paternal double

The three plays written before the approaching royal succession—*Twelfth Night*, *Every Man in His Humour*, and *The Merchant of Venice*—share a focus on chronological continuity and on the father as a principle of history. In combination with the succession, the turn-of-the-century timing of the first two plays underscores their concern with the relationship between present and past. And Shakespeare's acting roles as *Every Man In*'s Old Kno'well, *As You Like It*'s old Adam, and *Hamlet*'s Ghost around the time of their composition and earliest performances spotlights his investment in questions of

specifically generational continuity and discontinuity. [24] One might see Shakespeare's performance as old Kno'well, *Every Man In*'s primary representative of the older generation, as suggesting the possibility that Jonson felt an anxiety of influence by Shakespeare, who in addition to starting his career earlier was eight years his senior. But the older characters Shakespeare plays are ineffective, weak, or dead. So perhaps it should come as no surprise that what both *Twelfth Night* and *Every Man in His Humour* evince is the reluctance to put on the father's mantle. The first pair of chapters treats the motif of doubling in *Every Man in His Humour* and *Twelfth Night* and its connections to paternity and filiation. In both of these plays, doubling is a means of denying the passage of time its importance; it serves most evidently as a spatial form of repetition. Less evidently, it serves as a chronological form too. The texts' various replications and mirrorings entwine with their representations of biological reproduction and of the temporal continuity, whether from a recent past or a distant one, that biological reproduction suggests. But the doubling indicates a discontent with conventional generation and filiation along with a desire for continuity. *Twelfth Night* in particular offers a fantasy of disembodied and asexual replication; *Every Man In* distrusts even the asexual reproductions its motherless and wifeless father-son duo parallels and represents.

24. Rowe, in 1709, related the story of Shakespeare's playing the Ghost in *Hamlet*. See Nicholas Rowe, "Some Account of the Life &c. of Mr. William Shakespeare," in *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, ed. David Nichol Smith (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1903), 1-23, 4. Capell, in 1768, reports a story of Shakespeare performing as *As You Like It*'s Adam. See Edward Capell, "Notes to *As You Like It*," in As You Like It *from 1600 to the Present: Critical Essays*, ed. Edward Tomarken (New York: Routledge, 1997), 235-250, 241. As for Old Kno'well, the cast list attached to 1616 folio names Shakespeare as among the "principal comedians"; Rosalind Miles (*Ben Jonson: His Life and Work* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986]) says only that Shakespeare is "traditionally supposed to have played the old man's part" (37).

"Raise the dead, and no one need ever mourn again." So writes Lynne Simpson of Shakespeare's treatment of loss.[25] *Twelfth Night* begins and ends with references to dead fathers; its middle is populated with live twins. The play's compulsive doubling and plot-irrelevant references to paternal death respond to Protestant animus to perceived overindulgence in grief and to old Catholic mourning rites. I argue that *Twelfth Night* is part of a culture's response to the loss of mourning, and that the dead and doubled father is the central representation of this absence. Time and its boon companion, death, mean less in a world of repetitions, and the play's twins replicate not only each other but their father too. They substitute asexual reproduction for the biological generation that the play hints is a flawed process. The children's filial nostalgia also accompanies a closeted rejection of important aspects of the early modern family. *Twelfth Night*'s first identified audience, probably disproportionately made up of younger siblings, suggests the appeal of siblings "both born in an hour," whose birth order is unclear.[26] Early modern primogeniture, and especially English primogeniture, inspired debate.[27] In the context of

25. Lynne M. Simpson, "Shakespearean Loss: Mourning interminable" (PhD diss., University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1999). Abtract in *Dissertations Abstracts International*, publ. nr. AAT9920651.

26. See Wilfrid R. Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts, 1590-1640* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972) for data on the birth order records of Elizabethan law students. Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, and the Inner Temple did not trouble to record birth order for forty-seven, forty-eight, and sixty-one per cent of their students, respectively; the Middle Temple recorded birth order for all but two per cent. For data on the correlation between birth order and social rank among early modern English law students, see David Lemmings, *Gentlemen and Barristers: The Inns of Court and the English Bar 1680-1730* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), pp. 15-16. Lemming treats a somewhat later time period than *Twelfth Night*'s. However, some of the more dramatic figures on birth order, such as that more than ninety-four per cent of peers' sons at the Inns were *not* first-born, probably reflect earlier trends. Lemming argues that the younger sons at the Inns were encouraged to take their studies more seriously than were the heirs.

27. See for example Joan Thirsk, "The European Debate on Customs of Inheritance, 1500-1700," in Goody, ed., 177-91. Margaret Spufford, "Peasant Inheritance Customs and Land Distribution in Cambridgeshire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," in Goody, ed., 156-76.

these home economics, Viola's claim to be "all the daughters of my father's house / And all the brothers, too" (2.4.116-7) suggests both grief and security.[28]

Many past readings of *Twelfth Night*, following Stephen Greenblatt's "Fiction and Friction," saw the play's permeable borders between male and female primarily as representations of early modern gender ambiguity.[29] However, this essay argues that the dual-gender doubles and accompanying sexual "mistakes" also show how the arbitrariness of the heterosexuality that accompanies the normative biological family implicitly calls that ideal into question. Although the adult children of this play yearn for the repetition of paternal identity that so frustrates the younger generation in *The Merchant of Venice*, the play does not present this yearning as the natural result of blood ties. Rather, it appears as the longing for an early modern *social* identity that can only come from filiation, biological or not.

Every Man in His Humour is the most palatable of Jonson's turn-of-the-century plays, which include *Every Man Out of His Humour (*perf. 1599), *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), *Poetaster* (1601), and *Sejanus His Fall* (1603). *Every Man In* addresses repetition more broadly than *Twelfth Night*. Its double-plot structure has one plot focusing on the older generation and the other on the younger. Edward Kno'well chafes in the home of Edward Kno'well Senior, who wishes his son only a respectable life devoid of literary

28. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, Or What You Will*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.1.13-14. All following citations are parenthetical and follow this edition.

29. Stephen Greenblatt, "*Fiction and Friction*," ch. 3 in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 66-93.

ambition. Also living in the Kno'well home is Junior's cousin Stephen, a rube from the sticks. Father engages a servant to spy after son leaves the house for city adventures. However, Brainworm serves both the old master and the young. After various forms of duplicative rakery—imitation fencing, plagiarized poems—Edward Junior, with the aid of his city friend Wellbred and Brainworm, manages to get married. The aural accompaniment: a song about cuckoldry. Father, son, and everyone else are reunited under the auspices of one Justice Clement.

Every Man In differs from its Terentian forerunners in deemphasizing the love story.[30] The father-son relationship, and its accompanying doubling, becomes more important instead. But just as in *Twelfth Night*, that relationship is subject to physical boundaries. The Shakespeare play's dead fathers are disembodied through their complete physical absence; *Every Man In*'s primarily via geographic distance between parent and child. Even though father and son live in the same house, the play's plot depends heavily on their physical separation, with father tracking son through a disguised intermediary and finding out his plans only by textual means. Too, Kno'well Senior occasionally evinces disgust with his own paternal body, and with the paternal body in general. That fatherly disembodiment suggests both psychic distance and metaphorization—the parent-child tie in the play signifies more than a personal or biological bond. But what more? *Every Man In*'s twinning is even more pervasive than in *Twelfth Night.* The play has a dual plot, the aforementioned double agent, and two pairs of young men. Jonson also

30. I owe this point to J. B. Bamborough, *Ben Jonson* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), 21.

wrote two versions of the play, the first set in Italy and the second set in England. And of course, the son doubles his identically named father. The male-male twinning is in part a fantasy of parthenogenesis (or more properly, apomixis), one that obviates women, sex, and bodies. The exclusively masculine reproduction forms part of the period's and play's attitudes toward sexual reproduction, including cuckoldry fears. In a more interesting divergence from *Twelfth Night*, though, the conflicts between father and son in the play also point to unease with replication in general, including Jonson's own emulation of classical artists and his possible emulation by artists in the future.

Every Man In's anxiety of influencing (in one monologue, Kno'well Senior abhors the extent to which parents pass down values to children, and almost every attempt at teaching in the play backfires) is the converse of *Twelfth Night*'s desire for familial sameness. *Every Man In*'s world views likeness with wariness as much as it craves it, and it frequently repudiates the sorts of transmission required by filial continuity and by aesthetic continuity too. Jonson is more invested than Shakespeare in aesthetic filiation and therefore more wounded by its drawbacks.[31] Like *Twelfth Night*, the Jonson play eventually retreats to social institutions to unite its atomized parties (marriage in both plays, the benevolently paternal if rather sloppy judiciary in *Every Man In*), but not before making the repetition and imitation inherent in filiation of various

31. In *Shakespeare and the Loss of Eden: The Construction of Family Values in Early Modern Culture* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan; New York: St. Martins, 1999), Catherine Belsey shows how an increase in early modern representations of the Fall was linked to the increasing closeness of the nuclear family, with its promise of emotional fulfillment and its high-risk intimacy. *Every Man In*'s vulnerability to "family" is similar, though its fathers and children are literary ones who reach across centuries and continents.

sorts appear absurd, even threatening. In Jonson's case, this discontent with processes of social continuity forecasts his plays' eventual turn away from the classical models that inform *Every Man In*, models that he distances himself from even in the removal of the play from the original Italianate setting to the English locale of the folio revision. It also predicts his rejection of the dream of law as father, a subject taken up in the ensuing chapters on *The Merchant of Venice*, *Volpone*, and *The Staple of News*. That both this play and *Twelfth Night* double the father to suggest discontent with modes of familial and non-familial cultural continuity indicates the practical and symbolic importance—and the ambiguity—of the paternal role in early modern culture.

Part Two: Unnatural reproductions

This section of the dissertation juxtaposes two plays that figure paternity and filiation as other forms of what they perceive as unnatural reproduction: usury in *The Merchant of Venice* and the journalism industry in *Staple*. In each case, the abstract and disembodied quality of the economic activities suggests complex attitudes toward fathering and fathers, also represented as disembodied. In the third chapter, I read *Merchant*'s discomfort with creditors in light of the characters' discontent with status-determining fathers. The creditor, whether Christian or Jewish, is a convenient target on which to displace resentments originating in the family—and more specifically, a prime figure for conflation with the father. The seemingly out-of-place castration references surrounding Shylock and Antonio indicate not only the perception of ideal paternity as

bodiless, but also *Merchant*'s dependents' fantasies of building selves free of social inscription. The debtors' dislike of financial, physical, and psychological creditors is part of a desire to achieve identity that is autonomous, perhaps even self-originating. For Antonio, the castration motif is largely an unmanning, part of an English Renaissance experience of the child's relationship with the relatively financially toothless female parent as more emotionally satisfying and less productive of tension than that with the male parent; for Shylock, the castration references are part of a more general un*parenting*—Shylock as Jewish progenitor is threatening to the Christians, who display anxiety about Christianity's simultaneous opposition and indebtedness to Judaism.

The attempts of *Merchant*'s children at paternal reformulation via symbolic castration have multiple effects. Most centrally, they lead to Antonio's and Shylock's exclusion from the seemingly festive circle of lovers at Belmont, but the play also hints, particularly about Jessica, that efforts to deny origin in a father are self-negating. Too, Launcelot Gobbo's apparently irrelevant cuckoldry remarks foreground a corollary of representing a father as symbolically emasculated: the child ultimately questions the mother's fidelity. But despite the violent nature of *Merchant*'s children's symbolic castration and reformulation of the father, the play suggests at its close that their tactics are not entirely unsuccessful. The Christian victory over Judaism is more conclusive than the Protestant victory over Catholicism in *Twelfth Night*.

The fourth chapter, and second section of Part Two, centers on *The Staple of News*. One of Jonson's last plays, and his first to be published after the 1616 Folio, it

features a central family trio rather than the multiple dyads of *Merchant*. Father Pennyboy Canter fakes his death, son Pennyboy Junior rejoices at his apparent newfound wealth, and Pennyboy Senior, a usurer and Junior's paternal uncle, tries to cozen Junior of the fortune they both think he has inherited. Meanwhile Junior invests in a media company, the eponymous Staple of News. Father, in costume and successfully pretending to be a canter, in the play's language (he recalls Feste), tags around with ne'er-do-well son, who woos one Lady Pecunia. Pennyboy Canter, finally irritated beyond endurance, takes off his disguise and seizes Pecunia, who turns out in the style of a romance to have been his in the first place. Pennyboy Junior acknowledges the error of his ways, Pennyboy Senior temporarily loses his mind, and father and son find a common enemy in the form of a covetous lawyer. The news company collapses and the family unit is saved, even Pennyboy Senior. Though its reliance on allegory makes it feel like a masque at times, *Staple* addresses the same conflicts as plays much more noted for pschological realism. The stylized text presents a father struggling to stick the genetic genie back in the bottle, to do what Lear cannot.

Like *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Staple of News* links the early modern family with early modern commerce; it also connects fathering with writing. Decades after the Shakespeare play, Jonson echoes its images of father figures as creditors. However, the oppressive fathers of *Merchant* and other plays are here split into a good father and a bad uncle, with the uncle taking the part of Shylock. As that splitting suggests, the play isn't as focused on critiquing the father as *Merchant* is. Rather, it explores the state of *being* a

father. Although the seventeenth century usually figured male adulthood as paternal, *The Staple of News* suggests at times that fatherhood is infantilizing. The difficulty of distinguishing father from son can imply a childlike, powerless father, just as it does in *Every Man in His Humour*. *Staple*'s family is in this way an upside-down reflection of *Merchant*'s newly independent but somehow lacking children. The father triumphs, only to demonstrate that fatherhood is something of a loss of agency.

That loss is represented in terms of writing and publishing. This chapter brings together two strands of Jonson criticism: one on paternal concerns in Jonson's corpus as a whole and one on *The Staple of News* as the first major dramatic critique of modern media. The topics are connected through the technology of print. As Douglas Brooks demonstrates, the rhetorics of print and fatherhood were intertwined for early moderns,[32] and no less so for Jonson. Just as the metaphor of "breeding" coins in usury forms part of its confusion of usurers and fathers in *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Staple of News* layers textual cares onto paternal ones. That layering is key to the play's tensions. Everyone in *Staple* conceives of wealth—and law, and family—as *textual*: not ducats or jewels or spices, but financially significant words on paper, subject to revision. *Staple* shows father and child as uniting in the realm of law when Pennyboy Junior and Pennyboy Canter join forces to ensure that the family money stays in the right hands, repeating the process in which *Every Man in His Humour* brings father and child together in the courtroom. *Merchant*'s trial scene, in contrast, separates Shylock and Jessica even further. But *Staple*

32. Douglas A. Brooks, Introduction, *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*, ed. Brooks, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 1-25.

shifts from both *Merchant*'s and *Every Man In*'s embodiment of the law in specific people, paternalistic Justice Clement, Shylock, and Portia. Instead, the play figures the law, like wealth, as a series of documents: wills, contracts, and paper statutes whose nature is frighteningly revision-prone.

Since the legal texts and others are subject to editing in *The Staple of News*, the familial bonds supported by those texts are subject to change. One way the play represents this vulnerability is through the familiar mode of paternal disembodiment. Pennyboy Canter's authority over his son is shaky in part because his costume renders him utterly unrecognizable as Junior's father. His patchwork cloak miraculously conceals his physical identity even, and especially, from his son. Whereas *Merchant* implies that paternal influence is difficult to evade entirely, in *Staple* the relationship of father to son may be altered. Along with Canter's invisibility as father, the texts that determine the connection between parent and child are always up for destruction (the newspaper), revision (the wills), and improvisation (the canting). The relationship is contractual, not stable. But the play is hardly flexible on the proper uses of language, linking fatherhood to approved forms of language in Pennyboy Canter's emphasis on poetry, and sonhood to illegitimate forms in Pennyboy Junior's support of the dubious newspaper. Two other paternal texts, canting and the will, prove supreme, and the filial text—that is, the eponymous newspaper—collapses in a sudden death that seems less a martyrdom than a just execution. *The Staple of News* demonstrates the dominance of fathers and fatherly texts much more forcefully than the plays I examine in the first two parts of the

dissertation. But it does this with a great deal of insecurity, one exacerbated by its conflation of fatherhood, law, authorship, and printing. The separation of these domains from anything concrete and physically coherent renders them suspect. When Pennyboy Canter and Pennyboy Junior reconcile, though, they do so in an explicitly abstract and textual way. I argue that the repair of their bond validates the realms of the symbolic and abstract, under attack in *Staple*, and in doing so redeem Jonson's own unusually abstract play.

Part Three: The promise of disembodiment

This section looks at two different visions of the supernatural world and their connections to the bodiless father. Chapter Five examines the interplay of fatherhood, motherhood, and witchcraft in the unconventional household of *The Tempest*. With their characteristic languages of embodiment, early modern motherhood and the discourse of witchcraft mirrored each other, as social historians have pointed out. Witches' familiars, for instance, were often represented as children nursing at the misplaced nipple called the "witch's teat."[33] This chapter shows how Prospero's connection to witchcraft and alchemy parallels his desires for parthenogenesis. Prospero adopts a rhetoric of motherhood that connects him to the mother/witch he has supplanted (he is both Richard

33. See Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*. Also see Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Longman, 1987), and Dympna Callaghan, "Wicked Women in *Macbeth*: A Study of Power, Ideology, and the Production of Motherhood," in *Reconsidering the Renaissance*, ed. Mario A. Di Cesare (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), 355-369.

II and Bolingbroke) just as it obscures Miranda's actual mother and his real relationship to Miranda. Too, his similarities to Sycorax trouble the benign ideal of fatherly omnipotence even as they redeem the feared image of the corrupt, supernaturally powerful mother. Childbirth, in *The Tempest*, is itself an almost magical event—the rabbit out of the hat. Fathering in the play symbolically incorporates childbirth and takes on both the power and the susceptibility to persecution and betrayal of early modern witches and alchemists. I argue, though, that *The Tempest* to some degree salvages the figure of the mother through Prospero, despite Janet Adelman's claim to the contrary in her influential *Suffocating Mothers*.[34] In *Merchant*, feminization is generally loss, in *The Tempest* finally a strength.

The dissertation ends with a pair of chapters that focus more on older men than on the youthful figures who populate the other plays. *The Tempest* and *Volpone* approach the same topic, paternal disembodiment, but where *The Tempest* temporarily elides the physical presence of the mother, *Volpone* goes a step further to elide mothers *and* fathers. In replacing the biological family with Volpone's ambiguous, androgynous, servant-filled household, Jonson presents a domestic space that Volpone has attempted and failed to purify of its grosser bodily nature. To *be* paternal, the play suggests, is an experience of crowding and suffocation. In contrast, *Volpone* imagines *having* a father—and being a child—as liberation from earthy and earthly concerns.[35] Two singular details about the

34. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest (New York and London: Routledge, 1992)

35. Robert W. Reeder anticipates part of my argument here in a dissertation on precocity in Shakespeare, Marston, and Middleton, as well as in *Epicoene.* See Reeder, "Advanced Retreat: Precocity

play: one, it contains numerous unnecessary instances of forms of the word "father" — sixteen times in 4.5 alone, and twelve more in 5.12—without having much in the way of an actual father in the play. Two, its heroine is a nonentity, utterly generic and sexually vacuous. These facts are part of a rhetoric of absence that the play connects to paternity and filiation.

Volpone is in some ways a mirror-image sequel to the New Comedy pattern of *Every Man In*: the young bride has left her father's home, not for the relatively upstanding suitor of New Comedy in the face of misguided, greedy parental opposition, but rather to wed a paranoid tyrant, himself greedy, who locks her up at least as tightly as any senex could. Blameless Celia is not released from father to husband at play's end; instead, the Venetian magistrates send her back to the paternal home, a place we never see. In contrast to *Every Man In*'s all-in-the-family finale, *Volpone* pictures the end of the reproductive line: in addition to Celia's withdrawal from matrimony, Corbaccio's fatherly credentials have been demonstrated as false, the Would-Be's progeny-less marriage has been shown to be corrupt, and no conveniently marriageable heiress has managed to jump out of a cake for Bonario. Even the Fourth Avocatore's oddly lubricious hopes of arranging a match between his daughter and Mosca vanish when Mosca's duplicity is revealed.

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and Identity on the Early Modern Stage," PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2004. In contrast to the influential narrative of Philippe Ariès, which presents a gerontocratic picture of early modern culture, Reeder finds that these playwrights celebrate both precocity and immaturity.

Like *The Tempest*, *Volpone* wrestles with the somatic, but it never achieves détente. Celia's abstraction, her virtue, her name, and her language link her to its partially submerged wish for an indescribable heaven. She is fully as unimaginable as the early modern Christian afterlife or its heavenly proprietor. The play's representations of the afterlife and filiation commingle. In chastely father-bound Celia, *Volpone* also realizes both a distaste for reproduction and a longing for filiation. Her colorless and divinely vague physicality stands in opposition not only to Volpone's highly particularized life as quasi-paternal legator, but also to the supernatural mother Sycorax, distinctly and disagreeably embodied. Both in herself and in her domestic trajectory, pablummy Celia promises a childlike union with the father whose abstraction *The Staple of News* examines more fully two decades later. We learn no details concerning her actual parent and never see or hear him; he mirrors the mystery and incorporeality of heaven. Like the somewhat less bland daddy's girl Miranda, the "cherubin / . . . that did preserve" Prospero (1.2.152-53), Celia offers deliverance through the filiation that links her to a father imagined as divine. Heaven's boundless, eternal emptiness provides a liberation from the unities of space and time that confine Volpone and *Volpone*, and a replacement of the imperfections of ordinary patriarchs and the regrets of reproduction by a divine parent and filiation free of generation.

Some summary observations: it will come as no surprise to anyone that paternity and filiation were important in the English Renaissance. However, the implications of that

importance have not yet been fully explored. The ways those ties are represented in Jonson's and Shakespeare's plays articulate sensitivities and hopes in seemingly remote arenas of early modern culture, from the legal world and mourning practices to the burgeoning print industry, finance, and conceptions of the afterlife. These plays also present fatherhood as in many ways a social construct built on biological quicksand, an institution risky for both fathers and children. What appears in Shakespeare's sonnets a promise of eternal life through reproduction becomes in the drama a fear of inescapable repetition. And the disguises, disinheritances, and disappearances of the father in Jonson indicate almost an embarrassment with paternity, a reluctance to acknowledge fatherly status that conflicts with the urge to control progeny. Both authors' endless cuckoldry jokes are as much fantasy as paranoia, since the possibility of female infidelity frees both father and child from difficult burdens. And in these plays, asexual reproduction of various kinds—literary, economic, legal—appears superior to the sexual sort. In those cleaner forms of social replication, the symbolic child's identity is saved from the unpredictable variation entailed not only by the influence of misogynistically imagined mothers but also by the disruptive physicality of conventional reproduction.

We usually think of Jonson as an artist of embodiment, but these plays suggest his unease with the physical world. Jonson wants the father-child tie to counteract the progression of history, create a unity of time. Paternal abstraction is necessary for this to work, since temporality destroys whatever and whoever is concrete. His plays initially envision a paternally imagined law achieving this goal—or words, of which law is one

subset and drama and poetry two others. But finally he resorts to an abstractly imagined paternity itself. The Shakespearean trajectory is quite different, for reasons I discuss in the dissertation's conclusion. Ideal fatherhood in Jonson is diffuse—it takes a village, and an educated, powerful one at that. For Shakespeare, on the other hand, a strong familial bond is an exclusive one. Shakespearean male love almost always contracts as it deepens, eliminating some from consideration in order to recognize the value of others. The dead and absent mothers and wives in such plays as *Cymbeline* frequently allow a closer father-child tie, and the bad children in such plays as *Lear* and *Henry IV* serve partly to point out the good children and vice versa. Jonson's commitment to the ideal of the group emerges as in this way stronger than Shakespeare's. Shakespeare's conception of paternity places it outside groups and institutions at its most powerful—Prospero's active fatherhood ends, for example, not only as Miranda approaches wifehood but also as he re-enters the Milanese political scene. Jonson's faith in systems, on the other hand, attempts to incorporate paternity into a regulated model that anticipates future centuries' increasingly pervasive rule of law over areas formerly perceived as private. That conflict, between the representation of paternity and filiation as private matters and the representation of paternity and filiation as broad social responsibilities involving the state, still remains today.

Chapter 1

Twelfth Night and the Reformation of Mourning

Twelfth Night (c. 1602) starts and finishes with references to dead fathers whose link to the action of the play is clearly significant and significantly unclear. A lady richly left by one father is maritally paralyzed. Another of slightly lower status, also fatherless, leaves the family home. Fathers in Illyria reveal themselves merely in traces: Olivia's is mentioned in an aside telling that us he was "a count / That died some twelvemonth since," and Viola notes hers just in passing until act 5, when she and Sebastian verify each other's identities.[1] One might assume that the absence of fathers would free the plot from being the sort Jonson crafted, with the older generation intrusively hovering over the libidos of the young. After all, the casual approximation of "some twelvemonth since" suggests the count's insignificance, and the quantitative play on "count" and "account" underscores the imprecision of the dating and the wealth of the estate left by Olivia's father, apparently to her sole control. But rather than celebrating postadolescent freedom, the play reverberates with the sense of familial loss that accompanies entry into the sexual adult world. That loss is a social lacuna, literalized as paternal death.

Less subtle than the appearances of the fathers whose mentions bookend *Twelfth Night* in acts 1 and 5 is *Twelfth Night*'s twinning and doubling. The shipwrecked dyad of

1. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1.2.36-37. All subsequent references to the play are parenthetical.

Viola-Sebastian replicates Viola's dual identity as herself and her transvestite alter ego Cesario; it also copies the similarity of Viola's and Olivia's names and circumstances, with the two quasi-anagrammatic women mourning brothers. Even the doubled recounting of Olivia's circumstances and the mistaking of Feste for Sir Topas and Maria's handwriting for Olivia's repeat the trope. The twinning, an omen of mortality in many cultures, functions in *Twelfth Night* as a response to death as well.[2] A double is most obviously a form of spatial repetition: one person or image is duplicated in another place. However, it can also be *chronological* repetition: someone from the past is copied into the present, as is the case in the play. This chapter will show the connections between the play's doubling and the ambivalently longed-for figure of the early modern father, and untangle the multiple implications of that longing. A response to a specifically post-Reformation hunger, I will argue, the double in *Twelfth Night* takes its force from changes in mourning rituals that accompanied the decline of English Catholicism. It serves as a testament to the power of the father-child tie, and ultimately, as a fantasy of its replacement.

That *Twelfth Night* concerns itself with death is a familiar observation. Mortality makes its entrance in the first scene even with the evidently healthy young Orsino, who

2. On doubling as an omen of death, see Karl Miller, *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (Oxford: Clarendon 1985), 416. For an analysis of the double as death-denying in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German literature, see Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, tr. Harry Tucker, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 77-79. Freud, writing on the topic four years after Rank, concurs that the double functions as a denial of death; he notes that "probably the 'immortal' soul was the first 'double' of the body." See "The Uncanny" (1919), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, ed. and tr. James Strachey, vol. 17 (London: Hogarth, 1955), 219-256, 235.

wishes for music so that "his appetite may sicken and so die" (1.1.3).[3] "That strain again," he requests, "it had a dying fall" (4).[4] As with *Hamlet*, first performed around the same time, dying is the alpha and omega of the play. But unlike *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night* concludes with the promise of marriage. It also ends not with the more typically comedic references to pregnancy, but with a song that for many readers describes a mortal trajectory, especially in the fourth stanza:[5]

> But when I came unto my beds,
>
> With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
>
> With tosspots still 'had drunken heads,
>
> For the rain it raineth every day.
>
> (5.1.378-81)

The chronological progression of the first three stanzas moves from childhood to both marriage and maturity, so "beds" implies decline as much as sexuality or ordinary drunkenness. What the play does with that projection of decline is to oscillate between mournfulness for the past—and the parent—and a desire to avoid patrilineal strictures.

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3. Thad Jenkins Logan counts thirty-seven allusions to death; see his "*Twelfth Night*: The Limits of Festivity," *Studies in English Literature* 22 (1982): 223-238, 236. Anne Barton observes that these references increase in frequency as the play progresses. See her Introduction to *Twelfth Night. The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 406.

4. David Willbern, among others, has commented on the play's focus on mortality. See his "Malvolio's Fall," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 29, 1 (1978): 85-90. See James Calderwood, *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), for an examination of the ways in which Shakespearean characters seek immortality by joining with large collectives of gender, rank, and nation; the dynamic I describe in this essay is similar to that discussed by Calderwood, albeit on a more intimate scale.

5. In *All's Well That End's Well*, another dark comedy, the pregnancy has already happened. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Gratiano proposes a wager for "the first boy." See *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. M. M. Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3.2.213. See Elizabeth Story Donno, ed., *Twelfth Night*, cited in note 1 above, notes, for James Halliwell's reading of Feste's song at 5.1.366-85.

The preoccupation with death is not least visible in Sebastian, who usually plays second fiddle to Viola in critical treatments of the play. When Sebastian describes his father to his friend Antonio, the lines "He left behind him myself and a sister, both born in an hour" (2.1.13-14) juxtapose the children's birth and the father's death, though Viola says later, in an unusual third-person reference to herself, that her father "died that day when Viola from her birth / Had numbered thirteen years" (5.1.229). (One critic suggests that the illeism is a form of self-objectification, an ambivalence about living and agency. However, the absence of the expected "I" also distances Viola from her father's death.)[6] Sebastian's phrasing insinuates a substitution of children for parent, an inability to exist simultaneously, that Viola's version softens, though the precise dating of her father's death at her arrival to teenage years perhaps indicates a substitution of her incipient adulthood for his ended one. But the potential discrepancy between Sebastian's and Viola's accounts of their age at their father's death bears less analysis than does Sebastian's concluding regret, which I revisit at greater length: "He left behind him myself and a sister, both born in an hour. If the heavens had been pleas'd, would we had so ended!" (2.1.13-15). Presumably, "would we had so ended" means "I wish we had died together, just as we were born together; I wish I had drowned in the shipwreck along

6. Julienne Empric, personal communication, March 13, 2004. The third person also emphasizes the duality of Viola-Cesario's gender identity—the character speaks as Cesario here, not as Viola. Former 2000 presidential candidate and subsequent Viagra spokesman Bob Dole was widely mocked for his habit referring to himself in the third person in the election campaign. In that case, as in most other instances of illeism, the form was held to be a symptom of egotism. However, Dole's use of the third person can be read as self-objectification too—any good advertising campaign must feature the product's name. Illeists are paradoxically non-egotistical in their verbal attempts, however unsuccessful, to present themselves from other people's points of view.

with Viola." Sebastian wishes to trump death, his father's real death and Viola's supposed one, by dying. And paradoxically, he must *double* the dying—adding his own death to Viola's—in order to do so. The suicidal duplication renders paternal death less powerful. As significant as the duplication, and linked to it, is the imagined leap back in history: Sebastian's wish to erase his and Viola's existence restores the primacy of the father whose death his words have connected to their births. The backward glance subordinates the filial present to the paternal past.

In "I am bound to the Count Orsino's court," the formula Sebastian uses to announce his departure to Antonio (2.1.31), *bound*'s most obvious meaning is that of activity, of *going*. However, it also suggests obligation and immobility.[7] Usually an active, vigorous, castrating sort of young man who goes to sea, survives a wreck, evades a male suitor to fall into the arms of a titled bride, and gives his romantic rival a "bloody coxcomb" (5.1.177), Sebastian voices a longing for passivity here. Preceded by Antonio's use of the word at 2.1.6 ("Let me know of you whither you are bound"), Sebastian's "bound" matches the odd phrasing in line fifteen's "Would we had so ended." He does not say "I would we had so *died*." He excludes himself as subject instead and selects a second verb that entails a lack of agency, just as he wishes for a lack of subjectivity in death. "End" rarely appears this way in the sixteenth and seventeenth

7. *Lear* realizes the threatening aspect of boundness more fully in the obligations of another troubled son, Edmond: "To [nature's] law / My services are bound." See William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Lear*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton, 1997), 1.2.1-2. A form of "bound" also appears in Cornwall's revenge on a father figure, Gloucester: "Bind fast his corky arms" . . . "Bind him, I say" . . . "To this chair bind him" (3.7.27, 30, 32). The Shakespearean use of "bound," then, can indicate a destructive implication in ostensibly supportive social ties.

centuries, though it occasionally does in Shakespeare.[8] People do not end; things do. And "end" is considerably more final than "die." The term denies the possibility of afterlife. But even in wishing for death, Sebastian voices a longing for the stasis that death prevents.

That desire for immobility, for boundness, forms part of *Twelfth Night*'s frequent preference of stillness to movement, and particularly to the fearfully imagined movement of time. "Pleasure will be paid, one time or another," Feste remarks. Orsino has just told Viola, who at least pretends to agree, that "women are as roses, whose fair flower, / Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour" (2.4.68, 36-37). The priest who marries Olivia and Sebastian notes time's progress by the offhand, Prospero-like remark "toward my grave / I have travelled but two hours" (5.1.151-52). The play's language, if not always its plot, tends to figure the passage of time as deprivation—of people, of pleasure, of love. However, time and dying have little import if the dead can simply be repeated. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola and Sebastian double their mourned father as well as each other. In their twinning, and in Viola's twinning with Olivia, they asexually reproduce what has already been produced the usual way.

I will return later to the implications of Sebastian's doubling, but others in the play are also drawn to replication in a context that suggests a link to the response to death. Viola dresses as a man for reasons not entirely clear. Safety? Easier acceptance at Orsino's court? In the English source text, Barnaby Riche's prose tale "Apolonius and

8. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s. v. "end."

Silla" (1581), she must disguise herself because the Duke already knows her. And for early modern English audiences, Viola's gender-switch visually makes her a fit mourner for Sebastian, too—throughout most of the Tudor period, chief mourners at heraldic funerals had to be the same sex as the deceased.[9] Of the other possible sources and analogues—Nicolò Secchi's *Gl'Inganni* (1562), the anonymous *Gl'Inganatti* (1531), François de Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques* (1570), and Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* (1554)—none features a very prominent role for the twin brother she resembles after changing clothes.[10] In *Twelfth Night* her decision to do so comes immediately after a discussion of Sebastian's dubious fate ("Perchance he is not drowned") and of Olivia's brother's and father's deaths (1.2.5). Viola's sea captain reports that it is for Olivia's brother's "dear love / . . . she hath abjured the sight / And company of men" (39-41), Viola responds with "O that I served that lady," and twelve lines later, she has decided to present herself as male ("Conceal me what I am" [41, 53]). Viola's alteration is not obviously useful for her. However, the resemblance of the "dissembling cub" (5.1.153) to Sebastian must be apparent to an audience as early as 1.4, when Cesario appears with Valentine. And the recognition scene in 5.1 makes the similarity clear both visually and verbally when Orsino comments, "One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons"

9. Clare Gittings and Ralph Houlbrooke point out that the move away from heraldic funerals and toward private funerals in the Stuart period allowed husbands and wives to serve as principal mourners for each other. See Gittings, *Death, Burial, and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 192, and Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 272. According to Cressy, women, and not men, held the pall at the funerals of other women even in non-heraldic funerals. See *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, 436.

10. See Barnaby Riche, "Apolonius and Silla," in Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. 2, *The Comedies, 1597-1603* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 269-372.

(200). Just as the ideal for Sebastian is a doubling that replicates the parent and what that parent signifies, Viola's introjective transvestism replaces the missing men.

In a passage I have quoted in part above, the captain describes Olivia as

> . . . the daughter of a count
> That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her
> In the protection of his son, her brother,
> Who shortly also died; for whose dear love
> (They say) she hath abjured the sight
> And company of men.
>
> (1.2.36-41)

Olivia's dead brother is hard to distinguish from her father. Though later in the play she says that she mourns her brother's death (1.5.55), in line 39 above the antecedent of "whose" is ambiguous. More important, the brother has duplicated the father, first as protector and then as decedent. Likewise, although Viola's disguise makes her a mirror image of her brother, her brother is at least nominally a mirror of their father: "Sebastian was my father; / Such a Sebastian was my brother, too; / So went he suited to his wat'ry tomb" (1.2.216-18). "*Such* a Sebastian" implies that father and son were alike in more than name, and Viola's likeness to her brother is therefore likeness to her father. This twinning, then, is a reminder of the paternal, as is even her evasively self-duplicating confession of love to Orsino: "My father had a daughter loved a man" (103). Perhaps in a patrilineal culture the very existence of women can suggest the failure of symbolic

immortality, as James Calderwood argues.[11] Accordingly, Viola's transformation, both in its very act of doubling and in its female-to-male transvestism, represents the perpetuation of the father's name and lineage.

No less central to *Twelfth Night* than mourning rites are the identities of the mourned. The play's objects of doubling are almost all male. In her influential "The Providential Tempest and the Shakespearean Family," Coppélia Kahn interprets the doubling as maternally focused. Sebastian and Viola represent for Kahn the absent mother, the infant's first dyadic partner.[12] And parts of the text support this argument—"I am yet so near the manners of my mother," Sebastian says, "that, upon the least occasion more, mine eyes will tell tales of me" (2.1.29-30). But the verbal claim to maternalism is considerably hedged. The hypothetical occasion he mentions never happens in the text, and the "tales" Sebastian warns of intimate fiction. Instead, his next utterance, which I've already quoted, takes him back to the realm of the high-status male: "I am bound to the Count Orsino's court" (31). Orsino mysteriously becomes a duke later in the play. That he is first a count makes him a transitional object mirroring the twins' count father. And in other ways too the play frames Sebastian's links to others as less closely involving his mother than his father, source of social identity. Although a few lines later Sebastian acknowledges a female parent in the most general of ways ("I . . . / . . . am in that dimension grossly clad / Which from the womb I did participate"), the dialogue

11. See Calderwood, *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death*, 42.

12. Coppélia Kahn, "The Providential Tempest and the Shakespearean Family," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn, 229-332 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

immediately returns to the male, who "had a mole upon his brow" (5.1.220-22, 226). Even the realm of the body, which early modern tradition and Sebastian assign to the mother, with her sullying womb (it renders him "gross"), turns out for once to be dominated by the more specifically embodied father.[13] But the mole, ostensibly just a mark on the skin, is doubly signifying. The proximity of "womb" four lines earlier gives an obstetrical tinge to "mole," a contemporary term for the remnant of a miscarried embryo or fetus in the uterus. Linking the male body with reproductive injury, the father's mole hints at discontents with paternity and reproduction addressed in the fourth part of this essay.[14]

At the turn of the century almost half of London-born women's fathers died before their children turned twenty.[15] Even without sophisticated obstetrical care, early

13. On this topic, see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest (New York: Routledge, 1991).

14. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s. v. "mole." The passage from the 1615 edition of Helkiah Crooke's *Microsmographia* that the *OED* cites is a reminder of *Twelfth Night*'s ambivalence toward heterosexual reproduction: "The Coagmentation therefore of the Mole is neuer made without copulation." The passage's very self-evidence—if a mole is formed of embryonic tissue, how could it be made otherwise?—suggests a compulsive focus on the dangers of generation. In the second quarto of *Hamlet*, a different sense of the word appears in a passage that also connects it to the vicissitudes of reproduction: "So, oft it chances in particular men / That, for some vicious mole of nature in them— / As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty, / Since nature cannot choose his origin . . . ." See William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 1.4.18.7-18.10.

15. V. B. Elliott's estimate is 47 percent. See Elliott, "Single Women in the London Marriage Market: Age, Status and Mobility, 1598-1619," in *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage*, ed. R. B. Outhwaite, 81-100 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1981), esp. 90. On the comparative mortality rates of wives and husbands, see Vivien Brodsky (elsewhere V. B. Elliott), "Widows in Late Elizabethan London: Remarriage, Economic Opportunity and Family Orientation," in *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure*, ed. Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M. Smith, and Keith Wrightson, 122-54 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), esp. 123-24. Ralph Houlbrooke, in *The English Family 1450-1700* (New York: Longman, 1984), 209, notes that though in general many more women than men were widowed, among the peerage between 1558 and 1641 widowers predominated. Houlbrooke does not speculate on the disparity between peerage and non-peerage families, but it is possible that the desire for high fertility rates among peerage wives contributed to the switch in the expected mortality pattern. Browning's "My Last Duchess," however, is probably not representative.

modern English children were more likely to lose the male than the female parent, as is the case in northwest Europe today. One could argue that the comparative rarity of a mother's death would make it more, not less, compelling as a subject for drama. Today, the motherless child is arguably a far more emotionally evocative figure than the comparatively common fatherless child. But Shakespeare's plays, including *Twelfth Night*, acknowledge *paternal* absence much more actively, perhaps in part because from a pragmatic standpoint the absent father was simply more important to sixteenth-century children than the absent mother.[16] Heather Dubrow notes *Richard III*'s emphasis, for instance, on fathers' greater power to protect progeny against wardship and other possible exploitations. Glancing at the medieval underpinnings of early modern culture, Michael Neill reminds us that the bastard or *filius nullius* was "not so much the son of nobody as the *heir* of nobody."[17] *Twelfth Night*'s vulnerable twins do not recreate an Oedipally desirable mother or even a pre-Oedipal parent who is the source of all satisfactions. Instead, they generate a *socially* potent parent.

Much of what is crucial about the twins' father is his place in the larger world, as Sebastian's confession of his identity reveals: "You must know of me then, Antonio, my

16. Mary Beth Rose and Coppélia Kahn have made different and compelling arguments about the role of absent mothers in Shakespeare, of course, though primarily contrasting them with *present* fathers. See Kahn, "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, 33-49, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), and Rose, "Where Are the Mothers in Shakespeare? Options for Gender Representation in the English Renaissance," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (1991): 291-314.

17. See Michael Neill, *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 130. The importance of inheritance for bastardy is perhaps why men rather than women are bastards. Women inherited less to begin with and therefore lost less by being illegitimate.

name is Sebastian, which I call'd Roderigo. My father was that Sebastian of Messaline, whom I know you have heard of. He left behind him myself and a sister . . ." (2.1.10-13). The passage casually accentuates the importance of the father in that Sebastian identifies himself primarily *by* that father, saying little about himself but that he is a son. He acknowledges his status as a brother as well, but this information only emphasizes Sebastian *père*'s importance as a father more strongly—he is a parent twice over, not just a man who happens to have produced one son. The phrase "whom I know you have heard of" is perhaps supposed to be more revealing to Antonio than it is to us. Its vagueness, though, only underscores the father's power; the phrasing suggests Freud's Great Man, mysterious in the nature and origins of his influence.[18] We know nothing detailed about the elder Sebastian that might help us anchor him to a specific location in the play's shifting sands. Instead, the lack of concrete information both highlights the childishness of Sebastian *fils*'s assumption that of course, everyone knows Daddy and frees the idea of "father" to float throughout *Twelfth Night*. That idea is primarily one of social continuity, as Sebastian's emphasis on what the father has "left behind" suggests (15).

Sebastian's tendency to meld with others—his bond with Viola, his readiness to marry Olivia—is of a piece with the strange inevitability of Sebastian's and Viola's arrivals at Orsino's court. Viola's unexplained change of mind about serving Olivia and Sebastian's "boundness" quietly suggests a compulsion, a pull that the play acknowledges but does not openly explore. But *Twelfth Night* anatomizes Sebastian's

18. See Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, tr. Katherine Jones (New York: Vintage, 1939), 136-42. The figure of the "great man," whom Freud identifies with the father, is characterized by "self-reliance and independence" (140); these qualities, perhaps, keep his admirers from seeing him as a son too.

gravitation toward Orsino less thoroughly than it does his efforts to escape Antonio, related though the two may be. Sebastian's attempts to blur the borders of his identity focus primarily on social equals, to whom Antonio is sharply contrasted. In a symptom of this division, Antonio's plainspokenness ("Will you stay no longer?") stands out against Sebastian's ornate rhetoric: "My determinate voyage is mere extravagancy. But I perceive in you so excellent a touch of modesty that you will not extort from me what I am willing to keep in" (2.1.1, 7-9). Sebastian periphrases not only in order to evade his friend's queries, but also because the heir to a man evidently known to many as "Sebastian of Messaline" is a verbally sophisticated member of the gentry, not a sea captain. His discourse is not merely ornamental, though—"the excellent touch of modesty" that he says will prevent Antonio from pressing him for details has been shown to be a fiction. Antonio has pressed him for details already. The phrase serves as a hint that Antonio is not polite or courtly enough to follow Sebastian to a place such as Orsino's.

Unlike Antonio, Sebastian is painfully polite and courtly, almost to the point of insult. He begins one sentence with "Therefore it charges me in manners the rather to express myself" (2.1.9-10). He indicates unwillingness overcome by conversational noblesse oblige, the "manners" anticipating the "manners of [his] mother" in lines 29-30. These manners, with their sonic resemblance to "manors," are not a mere habit; they are specifically an *inheritance,* and the intimation that Antonio does not share them is enough

to make the difference in rank between the two men clear.[19] In reply, Antonio can only plead, "let me be your servant" (26). While one connotation of "servant" gives the request sexual pathos, the literal definition that emphasizes social inferiority is equally important in the scene and in the entirety of the play. Sebastian's tendency to merge with other characters excludes Antonio, who does not fit into the social mold of the Messaline family. His consciousness of rank and its heritability reinforces his idealization of his father—the father *must* be admirable for Sebastian, if Sebastian is to be. Conversely, his idealizing of his father reinforces his concern with rank, since rank is the system that says such idealization is fitting.

"What is your parentage?" Olivia asks Viola (1.5.232). (She echoes herself at line 244; even the dialogue is doubled.) The question—not *who* is your parent, but *what* is your parentage—is one the play takes seriously. The father as a flexible concept, in *Twelfth Night*, is more important than particular fathers and their wishes. The not-quite-present fathers in part emphasize the empty space where paternity as physical fact—in David Lee Miller's phrasing, "an essence that's not seen"—cannot be somatically represented, either by parent or by child.[20] Paternity and filiation as social institutions, however, do not require live bodily representation: examining the demonstration of

19. "Cf. the phrase 'to the manor born,' and the (significant) confusion it's caused in subsequent centuries, when it's often been represented to the manner born" (Doug Bruster, e-mail message to author, April 14, 2009).

20. David Lee Miller, "The Father's Witness: Patriarchal Images of Boys," *Representations* 70 (2000): 114-40. Miller argues after anthropologist Nancy Jay that filial sacrifice, in its demonstration of a father's control of the body of a child, serves to render paternity visible. For an extended treatment of the topic, see Miller, *Dreams of the Burning Child: Sacrificial Sons and the Father's Witness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

lineage through tomb-building that became chic in the decades surrounding the play's composition, Joshua Scodel notes that the English aristocracy put up monuments for their immediate family members *and* "built or rebuilt tombs for their illustrious (though sometimes imaginary) ancestors."[21] The absent progenitor, in *Twelfth Night* just as in these cases, is actually a more potent social signifier than a present one. Like the tomb statuary, the doubled dead of the play deny time its mortal significance and allow a reproduction of paternal identity untethered from specific fathers.

Response to loss is a frequent subject for scrutiny in Shakespeare's mid- and late-career plays. His and others' tragedies stage grief and mourning, of course, and often with broader political implications, but *Twelfth Night* is a rarer example of a comedy doing the same thing.[22] In *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Stephen Greenblatt describes that play's complex interweaving of dead fathers and defunct Catholic concepts of the worlds beyond death; that critics have not devoted much attention to the same connection in *Twelfth Night* perhaps just indicate the disproportionate social weight of tragedy.[23] *Hamlet* is no exception among Shakespeare's turn-of-the-century plays in its focus on the

21. See Joshua Scodel, *The English Poetic Epitaph: Commemoration and Conflict from Jonson to Wordsworth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 16.

22. See Gail Holst-Warhaft, *The Cue for Passion: Grief and its Political Uses* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), esp. 1-53, on the ways characters in *Hamlet* and *Richard III* use the same rhetorical tactics as actors in modern political mobilizations of grief such as AIDS activism and the POW/MIA movement.

23. Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). Also see Anthony Low, "*Hamlet* and the Ghost of Purgatory: Intimations of Killing the Father," *English Literary Renaissance* 29 (1999): 443-67. Recent examinations of the religious valences of *Twelfth Night* include Paul Dean, "'Comfortable Doctrine:' *Twelfth Night* and the Trinity," *Review of English Studies*, n. s., 52, no. 208 (2001): 500-515, and Peter Milward, "The Religious Dimensions of Shakespeare's Illyria," *Litteraria Pragensia* 12, no. .23 (2002): 59-65. Dean argues that *Twelfth Night* presents Neoplatonic conceptions of the Trinity; Milward, that Illyria stands both for two countries, Italy and England, and two religions, Catholicism and Protestantism.

paternal afterlife. *Measure for Measure*, like *Twelfth Night* a later comedy concerned with modes of reproduction, also offers up a pair of siblings who have not cut their ties with a dead father: Isabella answers Claudio's claim that he is ready to die with "[t]here spake my brother; there my father's grave / Did utter forth a voice."[24] Just as in *Twelfth Night*, the brother is mostly an agent—he cannot in himself represent the past. But Isabella does not imagine a living father. Rather, she fantasizes a communion with the dead. The plays are part of the same cultural moment: *Twelfth Night*'s obsessive doubling and emphasis on the death of fathers emerge from a context of rigorism—neo-Stoic hostility to emotional lability in general and grief in particular. More important, they engage Protestant hostility to traditional Catholic forms of mourning.[25] Those forms, such as intercessory prayer for the dead and extended periods of seclusion, represent the dead as dynamic, powerful forces; they may also allow the living a sense of control. In the doubled father, *Twelfth Night* likewise figures not merely a longing for a parent, but rather an ambivalent cultural mourning for the very process *of* mourning. Ralph Houlbrooke argues that the psychological effects of cutting prayers for the dead and

24. William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3.1.84-85.

25. Huston Diehl, in *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theatre in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), argues that Elizabethan plays in general "rehearsed the religious crisis that disrupted, divided, energized, and in many ways revolutionized English society" (1). However, she also contends that the drama promoted Protestant customs of thought, a finding I do not find applicable to this play. A more convincing position in regard to *Twelfth Night* is that of Anthony Dawson, who writes that post-Reformation theatre enacts an "obsessive return to the trauma of broken images, a staging and re-staging of the struggle for control of meaning" (Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 174). Instead of promoting Protestantism or compensating for the loss of Catholic ritual, for Dawson the theatre commemorates that loss. Dawson is primarily concerned with the place of visual spectacle in English religion and drama, and like Diehl, he focuses on tragedy, but his argument can apply to the non-visual aspects of ritual and to comedy as well.

doing away with the notion of purgatory were among the "great unchartable revolutions of English history."[26] *Twelfth Night* is a significant point on that chart. The "good father," as Olivia calls her priest (4.3.34), is not just a person but a past.

Social historians who take a relatively long view of English mourning customs suggest that individual affective display increased during the period on the whole, especially secular display. By the late 1600s the English were known for "cheap weddings and lavish funerals," as David Cressy puts it. More and more people commissioned funeral monuments, and inscriptions were de rigueur. Scodel cites a fascinatingly ambivalent epitaph for a monument planned by Fulke Greville that was to proclaim the monument itself a "[v]aine affected immortalitie." (Apparently, this was also an accurate description of the plans for the epitaph, which was never inscribed.)[27] Houlbrooke attributes the rise in inscriptions to their relative affordability and to the spread of literacy among the middle ranks, as well as to the influence of humanist culture, with its classical legacy of highly articulated grief.[28] However, the humanist inheritance was double-sided. The shame in the Greville monument inscription, even if artificial, signals competing paradigms of mourning. Rigorists such as Erasmus and his followers, among them Elizabeth's Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker, held that grief

26. Ralph Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family in England between the Late Fifteenth and the Early Eighteenth Centuries," in *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement*, ed. Ralph Houlbrooke, 25-42 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989), 36.

27. Quoted in Scodel, *English Poetic Epitaph*, 22.

28. Houlbrooke, *English Family*, 205-6.

should be as restrained as possible. This classically derived stoicism was the paradoxical counterpart to the intense emotions of loss voiced by many Roman and Greek poets.[29]

Focusing more closely on the effects of the Reformation, historians also emphasize the suppression of traditional sacramental mourning rituals.[30] Church and state authorities discouraged or forbade intercessory prayer for the dead, bell-ringing, and offerings at funerals; the last rites underwent severe curtailment; the burial service itself was cut short. Houlbrooke plaintively summarizes changes in mourning traditions:

> Catholic ritual provided for sustained intercession on behalf of the dead man's soul before, during and after the interment of his body. In 1552, however, the last traces of intercession were removed from the burial service, in liturgical recognition of the Protestant conviction that prayers for the dead were useless. No longer could the living do anything to help those whom they had lost.[31]

To one Catholic observer, Protestant obsequies seemed "dumb and silent." Singing was frowned upon, with all psalms eliminated from the service by the turn of the century. Puritans were occasionally mocked for their austere burial customs. Thomas Nashe wrote of his pseudonymous Martin Marprelate that the Puritan would be buried "without bell, pompe, or any solemnitie; saue that his friends should mourne for him in gownes, and

29. See G. W. Pigman III, *Grief and English Renaissance Elegy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 11-19, 27-31. Also see Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 221-25.

30. See, for example, Houlbrooke, *English Family*, esp. 202-7, and Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 435. For a literary scholar's viewpoint, see Scodel, *English Poetic Epitaph*, chap. 1.

31. Houlbrooke, *English Family*, 204. Also see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 602-6, for an overview of the mourning customs suppressed after the Reformation.

whoods, of a bright yellowe."[32] But as Clare Gittings observes, the old rituals died hard. The 1644 Presbyterian *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, Malvolioesque in its distaste for song, urged worshippers to stop doing what they were supposed to have stopped much earlier: "praying, reading, and singing, both in going to, and at the grave, have been grossly abused, are in no way beneficial to the dead, and have been proved many ways hurtful to the living, therefore let all such things be laid aside."[33]

Even if readers and viewers make allowances for the semi-foreign setting of *Twelfth Night*—much of Europe was still Catholic, after all—some of its souvenirs of England's religious past are more apparent than is necessary for dramatic verisimilitude. In one passage, Olivia urges Sebastian, "Plight me the full assurance of your faith, / That my most jealous and too doubtful soul / May live at peace" (4.3.25-27). Her request for "faith," which echoes Sir Toby's drunken "give me faith" at 1.5.105, accords with Protestant privileging of faith over good works for the salvation of the soul. However, Sebastian and Olivia marry in a "chantry," under a "consecrated roof" (4.3.24, 25). Henry VIII and Edward VI had destroyed all chantries, Catholic chapels specifically for the chanting of prayers for the dead, but the language of the play revives them. The religious references oppose Malvolio's undesirable if perhaps not very literal "puritanness" (2.3.119, 121, 124) to old customs such as celebrations with "cakes and ale" (2.3.98-99), parish holiday rituals that also recall funeral dole and the cakes given for souls in

32. Thomas Nash [Mar-phoreus, pseud.], *Martins Months Minde* (London, 1589; Early English Books Online), sig. G1r, http://eebo.chadwyck.com. The Catholic observer, David Person, is quoted in Gittings, *Death, Burial, and the Individual*, 51. (Perhaps the yellow of the gowns is linked to the yellow of Malvolio's stockings?)

33. Cited in Gittings, *Death, Burial, and the Individual*, 48.

purgatory. They clash, too, with the medieval veneration of "Saint Anne," ridiculed during the Reformation (100).[34] The juxtaposition of Protestant and Catholic references hint at England's unfinished conflict. In the light of these reminders of religion, Viola's mourning is not merely the requisite emotional travail of a protagonist, nor is Olivia's simply a narcissistic excuse for rejecting a suitor. *Twelfth Night*'s mourning is also a hearkening back to a denied form of expression deeply intertwined with family life.

Even Malvolio's incarceration, in the play's religious context, evokes the purgatory whose existence a good Protestant would deny. Likewise, Olivia's crying "water" (1.2.29) rather than "tears" for her dead suggests the holy water sprinkled by priests during the old Catholic burial service, a rite that lost official favor after the Reformation.[35] The soul that needed to be at peace was the ultimate locus for religious conflict, with Catholics convinced of the efficacy of prayers for the dead and Protestant religious authorities equally convinced of the need to suppress those prayers. So Olivia's certitude about her brother's soul in act 1 is only in part an opportunity for Feste to show his wit:

> FESTE. Good madonna, why mourn'st thou?
>
> OLIVIA. Good fool, for my brother's death.
>
> FESTE. I think his soul is in hell, madonna.

34. A Shropshire canon writes that "yn old tyme, good and men and woymen wolden Þys day by bred and dele hit for Þe soules Þat Þay louedon, hopyng with yche a lofe to get a soule out of purgatory. " See John Mirk [Johannes Mirkus], *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies* (c. 1450), ed. Theodor Erbe, Early English Text Society, e.s., 96, pt. 1 (London, 1905), 270. Greenblatt notes that in the country this tradition, though forbidden, lasted into the eighteenth century. See *Hamlet in Purgatory*, 16. On Saint Anne, see Donno's note at 2.3.100 in her edition of *Twelfth Night*.

35. See Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 396.

OLIVIA. I know his soul is in heaven, fool.

FESTE. The more fool, madonna, to mourn for your brother's soul being in heaven. Take away the fool, gentlemen.

(1.5.54-59)

Even as Feste's "catechism" (1.5.51) argues the needlessness of anxious mourning, it displays a security about the fate of the dead that diminished greatly with the Reformation. The English burial service, as Gittings points out, became more pessimistic about the dead's attainment of eternal bliss with each successive revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Nor could a good Englishman or Englishwoman still pray to the Madonna for intercession on behalf of the dead. In such a context Feste's repetition of "madonna" dangles before the audience a possibility that cannot be realized. Of course, Reformation pessimism about the dead faced resistance, as does Feste's claim that Olivia's brother is in hell. The 1661 burial service still included the following comfort: "We therefore commit his body to the ground in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life"; Calvinists were still trying to get "sure and certain" deleted.[36] (The uncertainty of "hope" belies "sure and certain" anyway. Perhaps the Calvinists, always good readers, were also concerned with the sentence's logic.) In short, the conflict over mourning in Illyria looks like the conflict over mourning in England. The Catholic burial service had offered to God the soul of the deceased to be "laid in the bosom of [God's]

36. See Gittings, *Death, Burial, and the Individual*, 41.

patriarch Abraham," a phrase absent from the Protestant service.[37] The loss of that explicitly patriarchal rite could stand for all of *Twelfth Night*'s regrets for the banished Church and vanished father.

Only in official and standardized rites might one mourn free of doctrinal error, or of secular accusations of vanity or overkill. *Twelfth Night* is by no means unambivalently nostalgic for mourning: Viola's arresting if mawkish image of smiling melancholy in act 2 engages in a delicate dance of contrasting aesthetic and stoic ideals. She presents herself to Orsino, in the verbal guise of a sister who "never told her love," as the sort of monument gaining popularity at the turn of the century: "And with a green and yellow melancholy / She sat like Patience on a monument / Smiling at grief. Was this not love indeed?" (2.4.106, 109-11). Grief is noble, her words imply, but mourning is embarrassing. The tender heart should accompany the stiff upper lip—and vice versa. In fact, many early moderns perceived open grieving as a token of debasement. Upon the death of the Duchess of Suffolk's two sons, Thomas Wilson warned her that passionate mourning was especially attractive to those of low position: "women commonly rather than men, rude people rather than godly folk, the unlearned rather than the learned, foolish folk sooner than wise men, children rather than young men."[38] For an aristocrat to mourn a parent with profound and overt sorrow, then, would in a sense betray the parental legacy of aristocratic birth. That the grief of Viola's sister be showily restrained

37. See Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*, 396.

38. Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. Peter E. Medine (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 112, quoted in Fred B. Tromly, "Grief, Authority and the Resistance to Consolation in Shakespeare," in *Speaking Grief in English Literary Culture, Shakespeare to Milton*, ed. Margo Swiss and David A. Kent, 20-41 (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994), 25-26.

is crucial. But the Illyrian repressed returns—forbidden mourning, dead fathers, and ultimately, chafings under the conditions of patrilineal life.

Unlike Jessica's change of habit in *Merchant*, discussed in chapter three, Viola's re-costuming does not accompany an explicit rejection of family. Nonetheless, it conceals Viola's inheritance status along with her gender. The play's early performance history reminds us of the predetermination of that status. The earliest reference to *Twelfth Night* and its performance identifies the play as an entertainment for members of the Middle Temple in 1602.[39] The Inns of Court, mostly populated by sons of the gentry, were sites of tension over social inheritance. The Jacobean period saw a bid to screen out students who could not provide at least a three-generation gentry pedigree.[40] And the Middle Temple, its records attest, was considerably more concerned with birth order than were the other three.[41] The Temple's audience of lawyers and law students—mostly younger sons among the higher ranks, though not among the lower—suggests a component of the fantasy of identical twins, "both born in an hour," whose exact birth order is not revealed

39. See the law student John Manningham's diary entry in S. Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 156. *The Comedy of Errors*, also doubling-centered, was first performed at Gray's Inn.

40. See Philip J. Finkelpearl, *John Marston of the Middle Temple: An Elizabethan Dramatist in His Social Setting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 6.

41. See Wilfrid R. Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth and the Early Stuarts, 1590-1640* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 31-32, for data on the birth order records of Elizabethan law students. Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, and the Inner Temple did not trouble to record birth order for forty-seven, forty-eight, and sixty-one per cent of their students, respectively. The Middle Temple recorded birth order for all but two per cent.

(2.1.13-14).[42] That element is the impossibility of primogeniture, hardly an intuitive one for late modern readers.

Very little has been written on the social history of twinship. Readers today are more likely attuned to the idea of twins, Doublemint or other, as sexual objects, and the idea hardly began in the twentieth century. In Book 10 of the *Decameron*, an ambitious man rises in the world by casually parading his beautiful and half-naked identical twin daughters before the king. (The king, though interested, manages to restrain himself.)[43] Still, the kinky visual thrill is not the twins' central appeal in *Twelfth Night*—they appear onstage at the same time only briefly, albeit to a gasp of "Most wonderful!" from Olivia (5.1.209). Primogeniture, however, stirred more controversy in early modern Europe than is immediately apparent, and England was thought to be harsher than the Continent in its adherence to the tradition. Inseparably intertwined with paternal allotments of status, love, and money, the institution was continually debated, by contemporary writers as well as *King Lear*'s Edmund, no less resentful of his standing as a younger brother than of his status as a bastard.[44] René Girard argues that the anti-twin bias common to many cultures

42. For data on the correlation between birth order and social rank among early modern English law students, see David Lemmings, *Gentlemen and Barristers: The Inns of Court and the English Bar 1680-1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 15-16. Lemming treats a somewhat later time period than *Twelfth Night*'s. However, some of the more dramatic figures on birth order, such as that more than ninety-four per cent of peers' sons at the Inns were *not* first-born, probably reflect earlier trends. Lemming argues that the younger sons at the Inns were encouraged to take their studies more seriously than were the heirs.

43. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, tr. Mark Musa and Peter Bondanella (New York: Signet, 1982), 10.6., 627-32.

44. See, for example, Joan Thirsk, "The European Debate on Customs of Inheritance, 1500-1700," in *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200-1800*, ed. Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk, and E. P. Thompson, 177-91 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) and Margaret Spufford, "Peasant

indicates the desire to naturalize systems of difference and hierarchy, systems that twinship invalidates.[45] But uniformity, with its promise of equality, must have seemed appealing to at least some early modern viewers and readers. Siblings who cannot be told apart cannot be assigned different standing, and the doubling that first appears to be a form of mourning for family in *Twelfth Night* eventually registers as a wistful vision of escape from the constraints of the early modern family, too. In this light, Viola's remark to Orsino that she is "all the daughters of my father's house / And all the brothers, too" (2.4.116-17) seems as much a claim to safe inheritance as a lamentation.

Primogeniture is not the only hitch in *Twelfth Night*'s wistfulness for the intact nuclear family. Despite the play's nostalgia for the father, its chafings under family life include a somewhat wavering resistance to heterosexual reproduction itself. The sexual confusions engendered by *Twelfth Night*'s twinning show the fragility of the heterosexuality that enables and is enforced by the ideal of blood descent. That ideal is made possible *only* by heterosexuality, as many of Shakespeare's sonnets implicitly acknowledge in their pleas for the young man to marry, so it *requires* heterosexuality in order to maintain itself. An attack on heterosexuality, then, is an attack on the system of blood descent that justifies its social dominance. Conversely, an attack on that system of descent renders heterosexuality superfluous. *Twelfth Night*'s challenges to biological kinship ideals are less explicit than its challenges to heterosexual norms (ahistorical

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Inheritance Customs and Land Distribution in Cambridgeshire from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," in Goody, ed., 156-76.

45. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, tr. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 55-65, 75-79. A simpler explanation for the anti-twin taboo is that an unexpected extra child can represent a severe economic burden.

though the term "heterosexual norms" may be). But in a context devoid of reliable contraception and lacking a strong tradition of adoption, normative heterosexuality and the normative biological family invite each other.[46] Early modern Europe was unusual in its paucity of adoptions. The practice almost vanished from western Europe in the middle ages and did not return to England until the twentieth century, a few decades before heterosexuality began to lose the prestige it gained upon early modern Protestantism's devaluation of virginity.[47]

At the arrival of the priest who marries Olivia to Sebastian, she cries, "O welcome, father! / Father . . . " (5.1.139-40), the very repetition testifying to the play's, and Olivia's, filiation compulsion. But an earlier vow, made and broken, destabilizes that zeal for the "father" and for marriage. For the magical-sounding period of seven years, Valentine tells us, "like a cloistress [Olivia] will veilèd walk, / And water once a day her chamber round / With eye-offending brine" (1.2.28-30). This romantic portrait of grief is somewhat undercut by the image of Olivia privately producing offensive brine for a

46. Heterosexual norms and biological kinship systems also require each other for many late moderns; hence the objection to gay marriage on the grounds that it threatens the family. However, as the biological components of family structure have become less important in western Europe and North America, same-sex relationships have become less have become less objectionable to the mainstream, even in European countries that are experiencing negative population growth. Contraception and abortion have decoupled reproduction from heterosexuality even as adoption and developments in reproductive technology allow more same-sex couples to have children. Perhaps dramatic advances in assisted fertility have made heterosexuality seem so irrelevant to the perpetuation of the species that even the homophobic responses to the AIDS crisis in Europe and North America have done only limited damage to the gay rights movement. The argument that traditional ideas about parent-child ties impede that movement as much or more than other factors do is supported, I think, by the disproportionate notoriety among gay literary texts of two children's books about family structure: Lesléa Newman's *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Northampton, Mass.: In Other Words, 1989), and Michael Willhoite's *Daddy's Roommate* (Los Angeles: Alyson, 1990).

47. On adoption, see Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 191, 73.

round chamber (pot?), an image picked up in act 2 with Malvolio's "these be her very c's, her u's, and her t's, and thus makes she her great P's" (2.5.71-2). Equally significant, though, is Olivia's identification as a Catholic "cloistress." Orsino's final speech also includes a religious subtext not demanded by the setting. When the situation with Viola's imprisoned sea captain has been resolved, Orsino proclaims, "and golden time convents, / A solemn combination shall be made / Of our dear souls" (5.1.359-361). "Convents," usually glossed as "calls" or "brings together," sounds like "convince." But for readers, the word invokes nunneries; the cloister of act 1 is still present at the end of the play. Together, the convents and the cloister offer a subtle verbal counterweight to the plot's inexorable matrimony. The language skitters away from the reproductive family even as the action moves toward the expected conjugal conclusion.

Related to *Twelfth Night*'s verbal reminders of celibacy is its homoeroticism, the discussion of which has a lengthy history. Leslie Fiedler and Bertrand Evans addressed the topic in the 1960s, unaided by queer theory.[48] L. G. Salingar glanced at it in the 1950s, noting that Shakespeare departs from his sources in having Viola fall in love with a man only *after* assuming male disguise, a change that visually underscores the same-sex

48. See Leslie Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), and Bertrand Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960). Also see Marjorie Garber, *Coming of Age in Shakespeare* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 142, Coppélia Kahn, "Male Bonding in Shakespeare's Comedies," in *Shakespeare's 'Rough Magic': Renaissance Essays in Honor of C. L. Barber*, ed. Peter Erickson and Coppélia Kahn, 73-103, esp. 88-89 (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), Joseph Pequigney, "The Two Antonios and Same–Sex Love in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*," *English Literary Renaissance* 22 (1992): 201-21, Laurie E. Osborne, "Antonio's Pardon," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1994): 108-114, and Jami Ake, in "Glimpsing a 'Lesbian' Poetics in *Twelfth Night*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 43 (2003): 375-394.

same-sex charge of her attraction to Orsino.[49] In fact, some critics have come to find the topic of Shakespearean homoeroticism simply tiresome. Writing about *The Merchant of Venice*, Steve Patterson complains of "the modern cliché (and, some insist, the anachronism) of Antonio as a lovelorn homosexual vainly in pursuit of the obviously heterosexual Bassanio."[50] Cliché though it is, this reading remains convincing, and relevant, for both *Merchant*'s Antonio and *Twelfth Night*'s. Despite its conventionally nuptial fifth act, *Twelfth Night*'s queasiness about coupling mostly applies to heterosexual pairings. Act 5 does not contradict the gloom in Feste's observation that "Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage" (1.5.16). *Twelfth Night*'s ambivalence about heterosexuality may serve as both cause and effect of an ambivalence about biological kinship.

"One self does what the other self can't," Karl Miller writes of the double.[51] Viola's mimicry of masculinity and romance with Orsino enacts the same-sex bond forbidden to her brother, just as her flirtation with Olivia enacts the same-sex bond forbidden to her. That Olivia marries Sebastian seems nearly irrelevant. The patent artificiality of their bond is no more a validation of heterosexual union than are Orsino's murderous impulses toward Viola or Viola's own masochism. Her "with a green and yellow melancholy / She sat like Patience on a monument / Smiling at grief. Was this not love indeed?" recalls Sebastian's earlier choice of the word "ended" in its synchronized

49. L. G. Salingar, "The Design of *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1958): 117-39, 121.

50. Steve Patterson, "The Bankruptcy of Homoerotic Amity in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1999): 9-32, quotation on 1.

51. See Karl Miller, *Doubles*, 416.

self-dramatization and self-objectification (2.4.109-111, 2.1.15). Too, it proves an ideal seduction tactic for the melodramatic yet genuinely dangerous Orsino. His perhaps overly eager question for Viola ("But died thy sister of her love, my boy?" [115]) and initial fantasy of "kill[ing] the flock of all affections" in Olivia (1.2.36) anticipate his simultaneous admission of love and threat to kill Viola in act 5:

ORSINO. I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.
VIOLA. And I most jocund, apt, and willingly,
To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die.
(5.1.119-121)

Having lured Orsino with a fictional dead woman in act 2, Viola escapes death at his hands only by the even more transparently fictional conventions of mistaken identity and coincidence in act 5. Olivia, taking Viola for Sebastian, protests against Orsino's removal of her "husband," and the priest arrives just in time to prevent a possible murder. In this light, the comedic hero looks like an unreconstructed Leontes, or an Othello with worse excuses and better luck. The alignment of desire and death in Viola's relationship with Orsino belies the notion of Shakespearean comedy as celebrating marriage as a means of social stability and productivity. To be sure, Antonio also links his love for Sebastian with violence: "If you will not murder me for your love, let me be your servant" (2.1.26). However, Antonio's "murder" is clearly metaphorical, whereas Orsino's aggression is on the brink of realization.

Twelfth Night is a romantic comedy that protests its ends. Sebastian's trade of Antonio for Olivia is no more reassuring than Orsino's anger. That the likable Antonio doesn't get what he wants and that the heterosexual pairings in the play so frequently violate the emotional realism we see at other points in the play makes the marital conclusion dissatisfying. On being reunited, Sebastian exclaims, "Antonio! O my dear Antonio, / How have the hours racked and tortured me, / Since I have lost thee!" (5.1.202-04). The grammatically surprising "have" in "I have lost thee" turns the lament from past tense into an eternal present perfect, one that draws his regret forward into the time of his marriage. Antonio's response, "How have you made division of yourself? / An apple cleft in two is not more twin / Than these two creatures. Which is Sebastian?" (206-08), indicates not only his confusion of Sebastian and Viola but also the barely reconcilable division in the representation of Sebastian himself. Which is Sebastian, Antonio's companion or the one who leaves him to marry a stranger? Sebastian has even picked up Antonio's language, as sometimes happens with Shakespearean (and non-Shakespearean) lovers. Antonio has described him as a "wrack past hope" (5.1.68); Sebastian's subsequent mention of "racking" hours recalls that description and draws a stronger link between the two than Sebastian's leaving Antonio would suggest (203). R. P. Corballis has categorized many Antonios in early modern plays, including *Twelfth Night*, as "fond fathers," good yet foolish men of extreme and self-destructive affection for their dependents.[52] This characterization occludes Antonio's possibly erotic

52. R. P. Corballis, "The Name Antonio in English Renaissance Drama," *Cahiers Élisabéthains*

dependence on his dependent. But Corballis nonetheless offers an accurate reading of *Twelfth Night*'s emphasis on reproductive bonds and imitation. Insisting on the paternal despite the absence of a literal father, his reading imitates the play itself. The essay's concern with fathers implicitly reproduces *Twelfth Night*'s own concern with doubling in general and with sexual reproduction in particular. The affective frustration is engendered by the play's imperative of heterosexual reproduction, the need to "leave the world [a] copy" (1.5.199).

But *Twelfth Night* acknowledges other forms of copying. The social continuity of the Viola-Orsino exchanges lies in *representation*, not marriage—Viola's imagined monument leads to a narrative of masochistic melancholy that leads in turn to Viola's and Orsino's verbal fantasies of ritualized death at 5.1. That death is both transcendent, a "sacrifice" (119) and paradoxically meaningless, an infinitely repeatable act (121). Again, the imagined doubling and redoubling of death is what lessens its sting. The pairing of Orsino and Viola is not. I return once more to the passage that introduces Olivia,

> . . . the daughter of a count
> That died some twelvemonth since, then leaving her
> In the protection of his son, her brother,
> Who shortly also died; for whose dear loves
> (They say) she hath abjured the sight

25 (1984): 61-72, 62, 65.

And company of men.

(1.2.36-41)

The Captain's "[t]hey say" and the parentheses that flag it disclaim his report of Olivia's sorrow for her brother (or depending on the construal, her father). More subtly, "for" may mean either "for the sake of" or "because"; the distinction would be unnoticeable were it not for the ambiguous "dear love" (39) and the retroactive shadow cast on it by the Captain's parenthesis. "Dear love" may be highly valued, or merely costly. A variant reading of the passage, then: because of her brother's/father's troublesome affection, Olivia has renounced men. In this light, *Twelfth Night*'s mourning is both sorrow and *commemoration of absence*. The Catholic ritualization of leave-taking could also serve as celebration. The play's nostalgia for mourning is consistent with an ambivalence toward those lost.

In "Apolonius and Silla," Barnaby Riche's Olivia ("Julina") is a widow, not a grieving sister and daughter; Sebastian impregnates her before their marriage. Foregrounding Olivia's position as a daughter and suppressing her first marriage and maternity, Shakespeare both emphasizes the importance of sexual reproduction in *Twelfth Night*'s parental backstory and eliminates it from the play's present. Duplication replaces it.[53] The play's unusual paucity of direct references to sex is part of its turn away from the

53. As recent work by Kimberly Anne Coles notes, Shakespeare was not alone among Elizabethan writers in representing doubling as the ideal form of reproduction. Spenser urged Elizabeth to maintain her physical virginity and reproduce her unchanging public image instead. See Coles, "'Perfect hole': Elizabeth 1, Spenser, and Chaste Productions," *English Literary Renaissance* 32 (2002), 31-42, esp. 43.

telos of sexual reproduction, far more startling in a comedy than homoerotic content.[54] In act 1, Viola and the captain fantasize about her as "an eunuch" (1.2.56, 62). Though the plan is apparently dropped, the momentary pleasure in sterility is telling. Acknowledging the fact of biological generation, *Twelfth Night* simultaneously points to an alternative mode of social transmission. Viola urges Olivia to leave the world a duplicate in a passage reminiscent of Shakespeare's first fourteen sonnets: "Lady, you are the cruell'st she alive, / If you will lead these graces to the grave, / And leave the world no copy" (1.5.197-9). She asks Olivia to bear children, but just as in the sonnets, this same-sex request for heterosexual generation leads to its own form of reproduction. Viola herself transmits a verbal and visual image of Olivia's "beauty truly blent, . . . red and white" (195). And unlike the young man of the sonnets, Olivia does too: continuing Viola's metaphor, she both says she will provide and does provide a verbal copy:

> I will give out divers schedules of my beauty. It shall be inventoried and every particle and utensil labelled to my will, as, *item*, two lips, indifferent red; *item*, two grey eyes, with lids to them; *item*, one neck, one chin, and so forth.
>
> (1.5.200-204)

Risibility notwithstanding, it is the two women who reproduce. The passages do what they talk about doing: Olivia's words remain as her virtual physical presence. Sexuality appears beside the point. The lips, after all, are "indifferent," the word suggesting an

54. C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian, 1963), 245.

absence of passion as well as a sameness. Olivia figures doubling as the ideal generative mode, providing perfect continuity rather than the chaotic approximation of the past afforded by sexual reproduction.

In Shakespearean tragedy, as Calderwood writes, men "deny death by denying birth," Oedipally seeking to become their own fathers and remove themselves from ordinary mortal status.[55] This comedy reverses that dynamic. Both its women and its men deny birth in denying death. Refashioning bonds broken by mortality, they formulate a symbolic mimetic world where the production of humans is independent of ordinary genital processes. In the very act of doubling the father, they argue his superfluity. The simultaneous significance and bodily absence of fathers in *Twelfth Night* suggest what paternity and reproduction mean and do not mean in both the play and its context. As with Shakespearean Catholicism, the social effects and rituals are mourned more than precise doctrine, practice valued over theory.[56] The doubling, twinning, and repetition in the text point to fantasies of social continuity that extend beyond the traditional sexually reproductive model of the family, fantasies being realized in a number of ways. The play rehearses a script later centuries act out.

55. See Calderwood, *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death*, 105.

56. For this characterization of Catholicism in Shakespeare's world, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 2004), 320-21.

Chapter 2

When Not in Rome: *Every Man in His Humour*

The difficulties of adolescent separation from the family inform *Every Man in His Humour*, just as they do *Twelfth Night*. In the more commonly cited version of the play, first performed around 1609 and published in Jonson's 1616 folio, *Every Man In*'s Edward Kno'well ("Edward Kno'well") is a young poetry-loving gallant stuck in the rural home of his father, Edward Kno'well ("Kno'well"), who wants his son to settle down and apply himself to something better than verse.[1] Despite his father's wishes, Edward Kno'well *fils* flees home for town with his aggressively unsophisticated country cousin Stephen, where they join young sophisticate Wellbred and a few of his lackeys (one a city rube, Matthew, who matches Stephen in naïveté and outdoes him in pretension). The first act sets up a dynamic familiar from Roman comedy: *adulescens*, *senex*, a *parasitus* or two, and a clever servant named Brainworm to function as *servus*. That familiarity is a central concern of the play. Jonson situates himself as inheritor of a

1. The dates for the first quarto performance and of course for the folio publication are not subject to debate, but the revision date is less clear. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (*Ben Jonson* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1954-1965], 1: 332-35; 9:334-36) assign a date of 1612, as does, tentatively, Gabriele Bernhard Jackson, ed., *Every Man in His Humour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 221-239 and Jonas Barish in *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 130. I follow E. K. Chambers and J. W. Lever in reading the internal evidence as pointing to at least part of the play as having been written around 1605, though Jonson certainly could have begun the revision then and finished it seven years later. See Chambers' *The Elizabethan Stage*, rev. ed., vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 359, and J. W. Lever, ed., introduction to *Every Man in His Humour: A Parallel-Text Edition of the 1601 Quarto and the 1616 Folio*, by Ben Jonson, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), xi.

tradition rather than an equal participant in one; this chapter offers a modest, retiring Jonson instead of the usual *vates gloriosus*.

As with *Twelfth Night*, a similarity between members of a lateral pairing—siblings in the Shakespeare play, friends in the Jonson—corresponds to one between parent and child. The continuity between Edward Kno'well and the similarly named Wellbred parallels the more significant continuity between Edward and his identically named father. Kno'well *père*, insulted by an intercepted letter from Wellbred to his son, deputizes servant Brainworm to spy on the young pair. But Brainworm is a double agent. His secretly split loyalties further equalize father and son but make the likeness seem transgressive, just as it is in the interception of the letter. After scenes of urban chaos involving imitation swordsmanship, recitals of derivative poetry, and several arrests, Edward Kno'well escapes Kno'well's pursuit for long enough to marry a suitable young lady of ample dowry, Wellbred's sister. Wellbred's brother-in-law Kitely, perpetually paranoid about his wife's fidelity, offers a few rhymed couplets about the inevitability of cuckoldry as a backdrop for the wedding scenes. Having begun at the home of one old man, the play ends at another: the crowd converges at the house of Justice Clement, a boozy magistrate who lights a bonfire to burn Stephen's plagiarized verse and pooh-poohs the elder Kno'well's paternal fears. The double marriages recall *Twelfth Night*, but unlike Shakespeare, Jonson lets the father survive the son's maturation; *Every Man In*, more concerned than *Twelfth Night* with the broader sweep of time, acknowledges the experience of both child and parent.

As is the case in the Shakespeare play, *Every Man In*'s doubling mediates a relationship between past and present, but its classical past is considerably more remote in terms of strict chronology if not in terms of artistic distance. And as I will suggest, what the doubled father (or doubled son) in the play figures is Jonson's own imitative legacy and its problematic nature, which involves the writer as both literary parent and literary child. The love story is central in the Roman comedies on which *Every Man In* is loosely modeled.[2] But here, the love plot occupies comparatively little typographic and emotional space. One function of this difference is to centralize the father-son relationship—and the duplication that characterizes it. The Jonson play is even more obsessively doubling than *Twelfth Night*, which focuses mostly on the doubling of people. *Every Man In* has a double agent, Brainworm; and two pairs of young men, Kno'well and Wellbred and Matthew and Stephen, the first duo sophisticated and the second not. But it also has two versions. The *Every Man In* folio, set in London, supersedes a quarto version taking place in a vaguely defined Florence. The Italian quarto was first performed in 1598 and published in 1601, several years before the performance and publication of the folio.

All these duplications might suggest a certain schematic quality to *Every Man In*. Too, Jonson's respect for the classics has been said to forestall complex characterization in his plays.[3] Nonetheless, the coexistence of that earlier quarto and the later folio

2. Also noted in J. B. Bamborough, *Ben Jonson* (London: Hutchinson, 1970), 21.

3. John Mulryan, for one, has argued this position in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent: Shakespeare's and Jonson's Appropriations of the Classics," *Ben Jonson Journal* 10 (1993): 117-137, 133-134.

complicates the significance of the character pairings, particularly the vertical doubling of father and son, as this chapter will argue. Jonson's reproductions are more explicitly concerned with the general nature of replication than *Twelfth Night*'s are. The duplication that *Twelfth Night* represents as a fantasy substitute for sexual generation appears in *Every Man In* as its own problem. Imitative though it is, *Every Man In*'s universe distrusts similarity. The play's conflicted duplications indicate mixed feelings about *a*sexual reproduction too, particularly the reproduction of literature.[4]

In *Every Man In*'s folio Prologue, Jonson immediately foregrounds mimesis and historical awareness as primary concerns in the play:

> He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see
> One such today as other plays should be:
> Where neither Chorus wafts you over seas,
> Nor creaking throne comes down, the boys to please,
> Nor nimble squib is seen, to make afear'd
> The gentlewomen, nor roll'd bullet heard
> To say, it thunders, nor tempestuous drum
> Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come;
> But deeds and language such as men do use,
> And persons such as Comedy would choose,

4. In the influential *Imitation and Praise in the Poems of Ben Jonson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), Richard S. Peterson characterizes Jonson as representing imitation as essentially either good (comprehending and transformative of the original) or bad (tending to misidentify the important elements in the original and mimic them unconvincingly). This chapter, though, argues that Jonson's representations of even "good" imitation are conflicted.

When she would show an image of the times, . . .

(Prol. 13-23)[5]

This passage is usually cited as an instance of a potshot at *The Tempest* and Shakespeare's history plays, a convincing reading. But the lines' importance for Jonson's own play bears examination too. Imitation—doubling—becomes both technique and subject matter. *Every Man In* is mimetic, Jonson says. To make that point explicitly just before embarking on a plot centered on duplication is to announce that the play is *about* mimesis as well.

When the Prologue speaks of "the times" (13), he of course means Jonson's own times. The passage evokes other periods as well, most obviously the start of the nineteenth century ("deeds and language such as men do use" sparks a sentence in Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*).[6] But more significantly for the play itself, to represent Jonson's "times" is necessarily to represent far older ones too. *Every Man In*'s seventeenth-century contemporaneity is based on mimetic technique carrying the Aristotelian seal of approval; mimesis is the method by which Jonson shows an image of *classical* drama, not just his own. So *Every Man In* turns a Renaissance postcolonial artistic quandary, the question of what to do with the legacy of the Greco-Roman

5. The most thorough and in places most convincingly annotated edition of the play is Robert S. Miola's (see Miola, ed. and introd., *Every Man in His Humour*, by Ben Jonson, The Revels Plays [Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000]). However, Miola's single-text edition follows Q, and my argument relies more often on F. Unless otherwise noted, my references are to the folio version of the play in J. W. Lever's parallel-text edition. Subsequent references are parenthetical

6. Wordsworth writes of the "language really used by men" in Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 1:123.

forerunners and conquerors, into a narrative of a son's escape from a heavy father and a father's ambivalence about having a son. Edward Kno'well's exit from his father's house suggests the same need to evade a precursor that Jonson occasionally makes explicit in his nondramatic writings. In *Timber,* he writes that "[g]reatness of name in the father oft-times helps not forth, but overwhelms the son; they stand too near one another. The shadow kills the growth."[7] Jonson's using comedic patterns derived from his classical elders to dramatize filial triumph and the humiliation of an elder seems not so much irony as it does identity theft. The successor playwright offers to beat predecessors at their own game.

But *Every Man In*, Jonson's first major stage success, is ultimately more worried about independence than about its influences.[8] In the tangled father-son pair and their vexed relationship to poetry, the play reflects an author who knows himself to be a developed, powerful literary adult—an influential father to the literary Sons of Ben—but cannot fully accept that identity. His role as a literary child, imitative and grateful, has

7. Ben Jonson, *Timber, or Discoveries*, in Herford and Simpson 8:576. Douglas M. Lanier points out that Jonson is defensive about dependence even on the muses (see his "Brainchildren: Self-representation and Patriarchy in Ben Jonson's Early Works," *Renaissance Papers* 1986, ed. Dale B. J. Randall and Joseph A. Porter (Durham, N.C.: The Southern Renaissance Conference, 1986), 53-68.

8. Responding to Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, 2nd ed. (1973; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), others, including Thomas M. Greene in *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), have argued that poets before Milton suffered more from anxiety of originality than anxiety of influence. David Quint, in *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), writes that originality separated Renaissance writers from the unchanging, timeless nature of sacred truth (20). My own argument is more concerned with the distinction between being influenced and influencing than with the distinction between being influenced and not being influenced. Thomas K. Hubbard offers a Bloomian reading of pastoral in *The Pipes of Pan: Intertextuality and Literary Filiation in the Pastoral Tradition from Theocritus to Milton* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); perhaps city comedy reverses pastoral anxieties as well as pastoral pleasures.

propelled him into it.[9] As *Volpone* suggests later (along with *The Alchemist*), the desire to be subordinate—sometimes a deeply conflicted desire, sometimes not—is one of Jonson's core themes, just as the desire not to be is one of Shakespeare's. His preoccupation with the experience of submission is one of the ways in which he is most Tudor. Jonson may be troubled by his own appropriations of classical predecessors, but the play reveals little envy of their influential position. The same imitativeness that Jonson himself finds useful appears threatening to the literal (and, I argue, literary) father in the play. *Every Man In* suggests that doubling is less welcome when it comes from below. So despite the New Comedy plot's apparent celebration of the drive to independence, father as well as son return to uninfluential childhood in their subordination to überpaternal Justice Clement. Other characters, too, hint at a preference for dependence, a rejection of fatherhood and other forms of creation, and Jonson couches their desires in literary and linguistic terms. Finally, *Every Man In*'s transformation from neoclassical quarto to homegrown folio appears an evasion of forebears much like Edward's evasion of his father, but the deference to predecessors of F's Prologue and dedication saves the play from literary autonomy, and Jonson from the threat of influencing others.

9. Robert W. Reeder anticipates part of my argument here in a dissertation on precocity in Shakespeare, Marston, and Middleton, as well as in *Epicoene.* See Reeder, "Advanced Retreat: Precocity and Identity on the Early Modern Stage," PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2004. Reeder's intriguing analyses first came to my notice in "The Art of the Slow Start: Precocity and Prodigality in *1 Henry IV* and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*" (lecture, Fourteenth Biennial New College Conference on Medieval and Renaissance studies, Sarasota, FL, March 11-13, 2004).

Every Man In occupies an anomalous place in Jonson's early career. Although he rarely borrowed entire classical plots, he made an exception for *The Case is Altered*, the play immediately preceding it—the action comes straight from Plautus's *Captivi* and *Aulularia*. And *Every Man In*'s immediate follow-up, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, revels in Roman and Greek allusion. In that broader context, *Every Man In* actually contains relatively little in the way of direct classical reference. Rather, the concern with Latinity and classical dramatic technique so apparent in the surrounding plays is partially submerged, transmuted into more easily recognizable subjects. That metamorphosis is among the more paradoxical markers of *Every Man In*'s deference to classical authority. The "ethics of reciprocity" that Thomas Greene characterizes as preoccupying Jonson's poetry is perhaps even more important for drama, which by its nature involves turn-taking and interaction.[10] But reciprocity between a postclassical author and his classical influences is impossible. The predecessors are not alive to witness Jonson's tribute, nor to offer the markers of friendship so important in his poetry. Jonson's imitation and emulation become acts of altruism; his criticisms, stabs in the dark. Neither fits a writer absorbed in personal connections. Representing these difficulties of reciprocity between Renaissance and antiquity as conflicts between father and son allows an intimate telescoping of the centuries that separate influencing and influenced writers. That chronological compression also allows Jonson to maintain unity of time. In making the

10. Greene, *Light in Troy*, 274.

present absorb his classical forebears, he actually obeys one of them, Aristotle, more fully.[11]

Edward and Kno'well's function as stand-ins for Jonson and his classical antecedents is admittedly implicit. But much of the language of the play's first version in particular makes Greek and Roman antiquity a perpetual undercurrent, starting on the title page and its epigram from Juvenal. This is especially noticeable in the quarto, whose differences from the folio I discuss at more length below. Robert Miola, in his edition of the quarto, points out its "teasing echoes" of Plautus and Terence, whom Jonson first studied in childhood at Westminster school: *rex regum* (2.1.16), *rimarum plenus* (3.1.54), "Pirgos" (3.2.14).[12] The play also references Pliny's *Familiar Epistles* (2.3.27), though in F "*Familiar*" is dropped as being perhaps too elucidative; the phrase becomes "Pliny or Symmachus' Epistles" instead (3.1.31). Q's Stephano swears by "Phoebus" (3.2.145-46); Q's Bobadilla by "Phaethon" (2.3.109) and the "[b]ody of Caesar" (3.2.111-112), the last phrase also used by F's Bobadil and Stephen (3.2.319-320, 4.1.86); Q's Thorello alludes to "proud Caesar" (3.1.25); a character speaks in both Q and F of "Hannibal," though he

11. One could call Jonson's thoughts about Aristotle either nuanced or conflicted. "Nothing is more ridiculous then to make an Author a *Dictator*, as the schooles have done *Aristotle*," he complains in *Timber*. But a few pages later, such a position sounds slightly less ridiculous: "*Aristotle* was the first accurate *Criticke* and truest Judge, nay, the greatest *Philosopher* the world ever had." Aristotle's identification as a "Judge" recalls *Every Man In*'s classicizing, authoritative judge in act 4. See Jonson, *Timber, or Discoveries*, in *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. E. Spingarn (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1907), 1: 17-64, quotations on 43, 55.

12. On Jonson's grammar school reading, see Rosalind Miles, *Ben Jonson: His Life and Work* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 15, cited in Mulryan 117.

The Latin and Greek are echoes of Plautus, *Captivi* l. 825, Terence, *Eunuchus* l. 105, and Plautus, 'Pyrgopolynices' in *Miles Gloriosus*, respectively. See Miola, cited in note 1 above, Introduction, 1-77, 32. Most of Miola's observations about the play's classical antecedents are anticipated by Lever, also cited in note 1 above.

means "cannibal" (Q 3.1.176, F 3.2.194). Further effacing the division between the classical and the postclassical, Q's Cob confuses Goliath and Midas and wants to be made "rich as Golias" (3.1.179). Q's Lorenzo alludes to "Agamemnon" (3.2.19); Q's "nine worthies" (3.1.6) become F's "seven wise masters" (3.2.215), and in both Q and F "*incipere dulce*" recalls Horace's "*Dulce et desipere in loco*" (Q 3.4.46-47, F 4.1.49-50).[13] Q's "Signior Pythagoras" (3.4.159) is followed by Q and F's "Trojan" (3.5.18-19, 4.2.19) and "*Nobilis*" (4.4.9, 4.7.9). Clement's allusions to Ovid, Homer, and Seneca in Q (5.3.197-98, 5.3.222-23) precede ones to Horace, Homer, Phoebus, Saturn, and even Phoebus's horse Phlegon (Q 5.3.247, 251, 252, 279). The play's "Roman histories" (Q 4.1.66, F 4.5.66) are inescapable.

Jonson famously conceived of his own literary influence in paternal-filial terms, as the rubric "Sons of Ben" indicates. The Kno'wells' father-son tie reinscribes Jonson's multiple inheritances from Terence, Plautus, and other classical writers. *Every Man In*'s New Comedy characters and plot are no less classical than its direct references to Romans and Greeks. As Miola notes, Kno'well is the obstructive older man, Edward the playful youth engaged in a clandestine affair leading to marriage, Bobadil the braggart soldier, Matthew the parasite, Brainworm the descendant of the clever slave who deceives the father and sides with the son. The brothers with opposed personalities also come from New Comedy, as do the abortive duel, the reliance on messengers and letters, the confusions in the door-knocking scenes with the father's reappearance, and the

13. Horace *Carmina* 4.12.28.

relative insignificance of the female love interest.[14] Even Justice Clement, dancing at the play's end, recalls the dancing old men of *The Wasps* (and *The Bacchae*, to list an anomalous tragedy). The quarto's Florentine setting suggests classical Rome as well as contemporary Italy, which was probably best represented in the English Renaissance mind by Venice instead. Florence was where Terence was first revived after the classical period; it was of course home to most of the Italian antiquarians who influenced the English Renaissance.[15]

The misdelivered letter meant for the son in *Every Man In*'s first act, an invitation from Wellbred, underscores the connection of the father-son plot with Jonsonian concerns about textual transmission. The messenger, a stranger, cannot tell the difference between Kno'well the father and Kno'well the son: "I should enquire for a gentleman here, one Master Edward Kno'well; do you know any such, sir, I pray you?" (1.1.126-27). Kno'well's reply—"I should forget myself else, sir" (128)—is intentionally misleading, though literally true. But the answer also indicates how closely the father's identity links to the son's, as does Kno'well's rationale for opening the letter: "This letter is directed to my son; / Yet I am Edward Kno'well too" (143-44). For the second clause, Q only has simply this: "Well, all is one." F's change echoes *Twelfth Night*: "Sebastian

14. See Miola, ed., *Every Man in His Humour*, by Ben Jonson, cited in note 5 above, Introduction, 33-34. Miola sees Bobadil as deriving from Pyrgopolynices and Thraso; Brainworm from Pseudolus, Tranio, and Phormio. He cites *Truculentus* a potential source for the duel, *Adelphoe* for the oppositional brothers, and *Mostellaria* for the door-knocking scene.

15. On the Renaissance and particularly Reniassance humanists as historically aware, see Jacob Burckhardt, "Propagators of Antiquity," in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (1878; Oxford: Phaidon, 1944), 128-140.

was my father; / Such a Sebastian was my brother, too."[16] Presumably this alteration is emulation, flattering. In any case, it offers continuity between Q, *Twelfth Night*, and F, the sort of stasis desired by Sebastian and Viola. For Edward's part, on discovering that his father has read the letter he responds with a regression fantasy: "Well, if he read this with patience, I'll be gelt, and troll ballads for Master John Trundle, yonder, the rest of my mortality" (1.2.51-53). On sharing the letter, both father and son voice fantasies of depaternalization, Kno'well by imagining himself as an pre-fatherhood adolescent and Edward by cheerfully envisioning his own castration, which he associates with his father's contentment. In this reckoning, to share a text is to desire a return to childhood. The equilibrium, like that imagined in *Twelfth Night*, counters "mortality" (53). The father wishes to be indistinguishable from his son; the son himself wants puerility.

The reception and transmission of written texts are what structure the father-son connection elsewhere in the play as well: "How happy yet should I esteem myself / Could I by any practice wean the boy / From one vain course of study he affects," Kno'well muses about Edward's interest in poetry (1.1.7-9). He imagines himself in a successful rivalry with Edward's maternal studies ("wean"), but the primary drive of his thoughts is the similarity between his son and him, mediated by texts: "Myself was once a student, and indeed / Fed with the self-same humour he is now, / Dreaming on nought but idle poetry" (16-18). The repetition of "self" ("[m]yself," "self-same") indicates the slippery borders between poetry, father, and son. And as I will argue, just as for Jonson himself in

16. Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night, Or What You Will*, ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.2.216-17.

his links to his own predecessors, "[f]ed" underscores the play's representation of that connection as fundamentally infantile.

The ambiguous privileges of childhood and literary dependence may be the ultimate goals in the play, but the counterparts to those drives are the fears of origination—literary, biological, and other—and of independence. An exchange between Brainworm and Kno'well explicitly connects Edward's learning to his father's reproductive unease. Brainworm, hinting that Edward's knowledge of his father's spying activities is a product of the "black art" (4.4.18), asks "Is not your son a scholar, sir?" (18-19). Kno'well's response aligns Edward's education—he is a product of Oxford and Cambridge—with necromancy:

> Yes, but I hope his soul is not allied
> Unto such hellish practice: if it were,
> I had just cause to weep my part in him,
> And curse the time of his creation.
>
> (4.4.20-24)

Creation is cursable whether Edward's or Kno'well's. With his premature remorse, Kno'well assigns himself responsibility for Edward's hypothetical abuse of education, despite the absence of any suggestion in the play that Kno'well has occult knowledge or interests. Somehow, for Kno'well, the father's influence is inseparable from the son's intellectual malfeasance. Edward himself shows no particular anxiety of influence. Instead, the scene focuses on the anxiety of origination, both from Kno'well's perspective

and from that of an outside observer. Searching for Edward, Kno'well is sent on a wild goose chase by Brainworm, who misdirects him to a house where Edward will not be: "'Slight, when he has stay'd there three or four hours, travailing with the expectation of wonders, and at length be deliver'd of air: oh, the sport that I should then take to look on him" (4.4.50-53). The idiom is maternal rather than generically parental, and the emotional register has shifted, but in any case the idea is merely a softer version of Kno'well's fear. The parent's creative labors will produce a disappointment.

As for Brainworm himself, he rejoices at his transition from influenced to influencing, but the play undercuts his exultation and subtly reiterates Kno'well's sentiments in Brainworm's language. After beginning his theatrical manipulations of both father and son, he anticipates Kno'well's language of "creation" (4.4.24): "'Slid, I cannot choose but laugh to see myself translated thus, from a poor creature to a creator; for now must I create an intolerable sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace" (2.2.1-4). The "profession" is military—Brainworm has temporarily disguised himself as a soldier—but the word's alternate sense of "avowal" retroactively emphasizes the contrasting "lies." The passage reiterates the dubious status of creating in the play. To be a "creature"—that is, created, or influenced—is "poor," but not deceptive or "intolerable" like the processes of influencing and creation. The passivity of "see myself translated" at line 1 predicts Brainworm's choice of wording when he concludes his celebration—"I am *made* forever" (2.2.18, italics mine). The apparent pleasure Brainworm takes in being a "creator" quickly cedes place to the pleasure of being influenced. That "translated" has a

textual freight as well as a more general one becomes clear in the passage's ensuing Latin: "*veni, vidi, vici,* I may say with Captain Caesar" (17-18). Q's rendition of the passage lacks the Caesarean tag; instead, Brainworm says "*Rex regum*, I am made forever," a probable Plautine echo (2.1.16).[17] Jonson's retreat from Rome in F perhaps renders the explicit Plautine resonance less welcome, but the centrality of Latin text remains. As with the play as a whole, the soliloquy speaks a desire for dependence both general and literary.

Every Man In's queasiness about influence and maturation has an exception in the cuckoldry-fearing merchant Kitely. Of his servant and surrogate son, Kitely says to Downright,

> He is a jewel, brother.
> I took him of a child, up at my door,
> And christen'd him, gave him mine own name, Thomas;
> Since bred him at the Hospital; where proving
> A toward imp, I call'd him home and taught him
> So much, as I have made him my cashier,
> And giv'n him who had none, a surname, Cash;
> And find him in his place so full of faith

17. According to both Miola and Lever, who source Q's Latin to *Captivi* line 825 (*regum rex regalior*) and remark that the change in F results from Q's biblical overtones. However, the Caesar reference in F also fits Brainworm's military disguise.

That I durst trust my life into his hands.[18]

(2.1.13-21)

Downright's response:

So would not I in any bastards, brother,

As it is like he is; although I knew

Myself his father.

(2.1.22-24)

But Cash does not betray the trust Kitely has in him, even to the minor extent that Edward betrays Kno'well. Downright's remark offers a hint of the real advantage Cash offers; Kitely is *not* his father. Like Edward and Kno'well, Kitely and Cash share a first name, but with more distance, with Cash a foundling "bred . . . at the Hospital" (16). Kitely's joy in taking in another man's child casts a new light on his determined belief about leaving his wife with his brother-in-law Wellbred's male friends: ". . . if I but thought the time / Had answer'd their affections, all the world / Should not persuade me but I were a cuckold" (2.1.188-190). Kitely's ruminations on cuckoldry are not mere fears, but fantasies too. He comes up with unconvincing reasons not to ask Wellbred to keep the others away (2.1.81-114), wishes to confess his thoughts about his wife to Cash and the water-bearer Cob (3.2), and insists on knowing exactly when the men arrive at his house (3.2.115-124). He predicts that Wellbred's "familiars" (2.1.98) will ". . . out of their impetuous rioting fant'sies / Beget some slander that shall dwell with me" (105-06).

18. This passage expands considerably on the quarto equivalent, which lacks any discussion of Cash's history (Q 1.4.10).

The domesticity of "familiars" reinforces the reproductive valence of "[b]eget"; Kitely thinks the rumours will have to do with his cuckolding. But as with Kno'well's pessimism about the "the breeding of our youth" at 2.3, and even more closely linked, Brainworm's ambivalence about being a "creator" and the "intolerable sort of lies" entailed (2.2.2, 2.2.3), Kitely's fearful association of begetting and "slander" also signals the play's more general anxieties about fathering and linguistic creation. The specifically and unproblematically verbal nature of his tie to another man's child ("gave him my own name," "call'd him home," "giv'n him . . . a surname") contrasts with the verbal error involved in begetting or creating one's own work. Borrowing or inheriting, it seems, is better than original composition.

Jonson's contemporaries and near-contemporaries reacted in varied ways to his literary doubling, however. Donne appreciatively calls him a "restorer of the old." Dryden's estimation is more ambiguous: Jonson "invades authors like a monarch, and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him."[19] David Riggs cites a reaction from the epigrammatist and clergyman Charles Fitzgeoffrey (1576 – 1637) as typical of seventeenth-century responses to Jonson: in one poem, Fitzgeoffrey first charges him with plagiarizing Plautus and then judges him not guilty because his *imitatio* is better than the model.[20] (Justice Clement acquits Brainworm on similar grounds: "Thou hast

19. Donne and Dryden cited in D. H. Craig, *Ben Jonson: The Critical Heritage, 1599-1798* (London: Routledge, 1990), 109, 253.

20. Fitzgeoffrey's Latin is in Herford and Simpson 11:370. Riggs' translation: "you have certainly pilfered these artful plays, which you continue to sell as your own, from the serene heavens." Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 37, elsewhere cited parenthetically within the text.

done or assisted to nothing, in my judgment, but deserves to be pardon'd for the wit o'the offense" [5.1.173-75]). One of the harshest assessments, unsurprisingly, comes from John Marston, who lampooned Jonson in *What You Will* as "Lampatho Doria," obsessed with "The musty *sawe* / Of anticke *Donate*."[21]

Regardless of others' mixed feelings about his reproduction of predecessors, Jonson himself occasionally appears to *feign* defensiveness about his imitations. The 1600 quarto of *Every Man Out of His Humour* offers a brilliant mockery of his accusers' concerns. The edition's epigram, cited in Riggs, is "I walked not where others trod." The origin is Horace, addressing accusations of imitating the Greeks too closely.[22] In the Induction to *Every Man Out of His Humour*, Jonson's Cordatus can defend invention and independence only by citing four classical predecessors who did the same.[23] Miola argues that *Every Man In* distinguishes between mere poetasters and real poets in that the former "merely apes his betters, ignorantly and mechanically parroting verses," while the latter "creatively imitates others, transforming their works into new art."[24] But the line between ignorant parroting and creative imitation is not always clear in the play. The more evident distinction is that the urban gull Matthew, the play's primary representation of a bad poet,

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21. *What You Will*, in *The Plays of John Marston*, ed. H. Harvey Wood (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1938), 2:258, cited in Riggs 74.

22. Horace *Epistles* 1.19 to Maecenas, cited in Riggs 65.

23. From the Induction to *Every Man Out of His Humour*, cited in Miola 32:

> Menander, Philemon, Cecilius, Plautus, and the rest, . . . have utterly excluded the chorus, altered the property of the persons, their names, and natures, and augmented it with all liberty, according to the elegancy of disposition of those times wherein they wrote. I see not then, but we should enjoy the same licence or free power to illustrate and heighten our invention as they did.
>
> (261-8)

24. Miola, ed., 32.

imitates recent and contemporary works by Christopher Marlowe and Samuel Daniel rather than the classics (4.2.47-48, 5.5.21-22). It is perhaps for this disloyalty to the Greeks and Romans as much as for his ineptitude that the play penalizes him, both in his own ridiculousness and in other characters' reactions to him. "This is stolen!" Clement observes of Matthew's homage to Daniel; Edward comments that Matthew has "a miraculous gift, to make it absurder than it was" (5.5.23-25).

Poetry is not the play's only inspiration of poor imitations. Bobadil's inept swordsmanship is kindled by a how-to treatise (1.5.97). Stephen, a few decades behind the times, passionately desires "a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting" (1.1.30-31). His aping of his uncle's phrasing ("we do not stand much upon our gentility" [1.1.80, 1.2.2]) is another instance of verbal teaching gone awry; it justifies the fear of influence. Matthew, Bobadil, and Stephen function as split-off versions of Edward and Wellbred, the bad version of learning. (In their studiousness, they also appear oddly like Jonson, whose learning is sometimes worn lightly but is sometimes, especially in his longer works, obedient academese ["as *Tully* says . . ."]). If the cuckoldry thread woven through the play argues reproduction's alarming unpredictability, the chaos that *Twelfth Night* also turns against, the immediate and unwelcome recognizability of Matthew's plagiarized poetry and Stephen's conversational gambits hints at the desire to escape reproduction's predictability. This distressingly inevitable quality, made evident in the similarity of the Kno'wells, father and son, also informs Kno'well's soliloquy on child-rearing, addressed below. The soliloquy's connection of the father's language to the

moral deformation of the young suggests how these incompetent and sometimes illicit reproductions fit into a play ostensibly about generational conflict. Matthew figures the fear of imitation, not primarily from the perspective of the younger generation, but from the older. Although New Comedy and its successors generally sympathize with the young, Jonson assigns most of the soliloquies to Kno'well and Kitely, who though not evidently senescent is old enough to have reared Cash from childhood to maturity. Of nine soliloquies in the play, Brainworm has two, Kitely three, Kno'well four. Kno'well's are by far the longest, at forty-seven and sixty-six lines beginning at 1.2.54 and 2.3, respectively. The lopsided count indicates what sort of perspective influences responses to Matthew.

Jonson's reproduction of *Every Man In* is likewise vexed. In the folio, he creates a second version of a play whose first version already reproduces aspects of classical drama, and distances that second version from its oldest sources. The decision to reproduce the quarto in the folio emphasizes Jonson's discontent with the too-perfect imperfection of reproduction itself, the inevitability of its success. As with the doubling in *Twelfth Night*, the doubling of *Every Man In* signals both a fascination with reproduction and a discontent with it. That Q copies its predecessors is what necessitates Q's copying by F. Revising Q, Jonson throws off some of the shadow of his Roman predecessors in the remove from Italy and the drastic minimization of classical references. The revision seems to match *Every Man In*'s plot of the younger generation's triumph. But that plot is deceptive—Kno'well catches up with Edward, who in marrying

renounces some of the freedoms that so aggravate Kno'well in the first place, and both are subsumed into the paternal and legal institutions represented by Justice Clement.

Q and F begin with an epigram from Juvenal's seventh satire—*Haud tamen invideas vati, quem pulpita pascunt* ["Yet you should hardly resent the poet, whom the stage feeds"]. The line is generally read as a defense of Jonson himself.[25] But *tamen* ("yet," "still," "however," "nonetheless") registers Jonson's ambivalence. Perhaps the poet *should* be resented, whether predecessor, self, or descendant. Q quotes the immediately preceding line as well: "*Quod non dant proceres, dabit Histrio*," or "What the lords don't give, the actor will." Jonson occludes the source of the passage in Q, but he cites Juvenal in F even as he shortens the quotation. The changes, typifying the stutter-step transition from Q to F, involve diminished use of the source, recompensed by increased deference. Heightened tensions about filiation in F reify the literary tensions involved in mimesis and revision.

In a passage absent from Q, Kno'well locates the problems of youth in the imitation of their elders. Because the addition of such a long speech in F is a significant indication of Jonson's priorities for the revision, I reproduce four excerpts here:

> Nay, would ourselves were not the first, even parents,
> That did destroy the hopes in our own children:
> Or they not learned our vices in their cradles,
> And sucked in our ill customs with their milk.

25. See for example Zachary Lesser, "Walter Burre's The Knight of the Burning Pestle," *English Literary Renaissance* 29, no.1 (1999): 22-43, esp. 29-30.

Ere all their teeth be born, or they can speak,
We make their palates cunning! The first words
We form their tongues with are licentious jests!
Can it call “whore”? Cry “bastard”? Oh, then, kiss it;
A witty child! Can’t swear? The father’s dearling!
Give it two plums. Nay, rather than ’t shall learn
No bawdy song, the mother herself will teach it!

(2.3.14-24)

Note, what we fathers do! Look, how we live:
What mistresses we keep! At what expense,
In our sons’ eyes! Where they may handle our gifts,
Hear our lascivious courtships, see our dalliance,
Taste of the same provoking meats with us,
To ruin of our states! Nay, when our own
Portion is fled, to prey on their remainder,
We call them into fellowship of vice,
Bait ’em with the young chambermaid, to seal,
And teach ’em all bad ways, to buy affliction!

(32-41)

. . . we spoil our own, with leading them.
Well, I thank heaven, I never yet was he,

That travelled with my son, before sixteen,

To show him the Venetian courtesans.

Nor read the grammar of cheating I had made

To my sharp boy, at twelve: repeating still

The rule, 'Get money'; still, 'Get money, boy';

'No matter by what means'

(43-50)

My son, I hope, hath met within my threshold

None of these household precedents, which are strong

And swift to rape youth to their precipice.

(58-60)

To "learn," "teach," "read," and absorb the mysteries of "grammar" from predecessors appear the seeds of moral destruction (16, 22, 23, 24, 47). Equally notable is the confluence of illicit sexuality, domestic violation, and verbal inheritance, starting with Kno'well's comments on Wellbred and ending with the "courtesans" who operate as tokens of Italian culture passed from father to son (46).[26] The father abhors the paternal body. Just as in *Twelfth Night*, reproduction appears tainted by the somatic. And the courtesans recall the "Bordello" of 1.1.172; the Italy Jonson attempts to leave behind in the folio returns in a welter of inherited depravity and linguistic error. Problems with the

26. The name of Edward Kno'well's same-generation counterpart Wellbred (in Q the more generic "Prospero") signifies parentage even as the play occludes his parents, who are distantly perceptible only as producers of children. The name, his mark of dependence, is also his mark of privilege. Both Q and F emphasize the privilege, but in F Jonson ultimately acknowledges the *dependence as privilege*.

generational transmission of language are interwoven with the child's introduction to sexuality and reproduction (22). For Jonson, conversely, the domestic ruptures of *Every Man In* are interwoven with the generational transmission of language. In each case, the doubling of the precursor's words endangers followers through bringing them to a queasy maturity. The denunciation of the inherited "words / We form their tongues with" (19-20) seems at odds with Jonson's literary-filial practice: the primary source of lines 14-34 is a Roman predecessor, Quintilian.[27] To argue that the sentiments espoused in the passage are merely those of an Angry Old Man who speaks in order for the playwright to mock him is also to argue that Jonson mocks Quintilian. But elsewhere, particularly in the *Discoveries*, Jonson adopts Quintilian's sentiments as his own, to the point of appearing a plagiarist.[28] It is difficult, then, to simply dismiss the connection between Kno'well's ideas about cultural transmission and Jonson's. The followers themselves do not object. Only the forerunner does.

The passage above, part of Kno'well's response to the intercepted letter, first emphasizes youthful debauchery but ultimately absolves the young of responsibility and guilt. That Kno'well takes the letter for himself indicates his desire to occupy the space held by his son, in all its lack of culpability. But the smudged lines between child, parent, and their texts produce shame too. Even his nephew Stephen, who copies Kno'well's phrases idiotically (1.1.85, 90, 111) violates the older man's sense of dignity: "fore heaven, I am asham'd / Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me" (122-123). And when

27. Quintilian *Institutes of Oratory* 1.2.6-8. For Juvenal, Horace, and Ovid, revisit Jackson or Miola eds. for details.

28. See for example Herford and Simpson 2:446.

Kno'well reads the letter meant for his son, he excuses his act, though alone on stage: "Well, I will break it ope—old men are curious— / Be it but for the style's sake and the phrase" (1.1.147-48). More to the point here, F's retreat from Q's classical matrix parallels an emotional retreat from fatherhood in 1.1. Q's letter upbraids Lorenzo Junior (F's Edward Kno'well) in specifically literary and classical terms: "I doubt Apollo hath got thee to be his ingle, . . . what's your god's name? Apollo? Ay, Apollo. . . . let your Muses go spin for once" and drops Latin here and there: "*quis contra divos*," "Poet *Nuntius*" (139, 163, 144, 167). The Greek and Latin references fall away from the letter altogether in F. Kno'well's reaction to the letter also changes noticeably in the second version. After reading the mildly insulting letter in Q, Lorenzo Senior comments, "opinion is a fool, / And hath abus'd my senses" (185-86). But in F, more stung by the letter's mockery ("Leave thy vigilant father alone, to number over his green apricots"), Kno'well concludes that "affection makes a fool / Of any man too much the father" (157, 189-190). In divesting the folio of Latin and Greek, Jonson appears to rid himself of some of the baggage of classical predecessors, just as the letter itself recommends that Edward leave his father behind. But the rejection of fatherhood that sums up the response to Wellbred's letter in F—the last lines of a soliloquy—is the perspective of the father, not the child. The scene's dominant desire is independence of dependents rather than of forebears.

Kno'well's initial reaction to the intercepted letter, responding to "smock" and "wenches" (66, 70), links Wellbred's error in epistolary judgment to his sexuality: "From

the Bordello, it might come as well; / The Spital: or Pict-hatch" (1.1.172-73). The Spital primarily treated sexually transmitted disease; Pict-hatch was a neighborhood associated with prostitution. These references to suburban London are typical of the folio, but "Bordello," a reference absent in the quarto, italicizes the ostensibly non-Italian text, connecting the folio to an older version of the play and perhaps as well to the Italy that mediates England's connection with ancient Rome. In F, the letter functions as a nexus for several different intersections of past and present: where Q's Lorenzo Senior's next meditation on the letter features some brief commonplaces about reason's government over the body politic (2.2), F's Kno'well is moved to consider his own youth. His reactions to the letter link F's backward glances toward an Italy imagined as corrupt to a puzzled consideration of the ties between older and younger generations, historical and contemporary:

> I cannot lose the thought, yet, of this letter,
> Sent to my son: nor leave to admire the change
> Of manner and the breeding of our youth,
> Within the kingdom, since myself was one.
> When I was young, he lived not in the stews,
> Durst have conceived a scorn and uttered it
> On a grey head; age was authority
> Against a buffoon: and a man had then
> A certain reverence paid unto his years,

That had none due unto his life.

(2.3.1-10)

Kno'well doesn't sound entirely nostalgic. Despite following a letter that justifies hostility to youth, his musings show at least as much envy of the young as respect for the old. At any rate, in Kno'well's fears about Edward's fondness for poetry and in the episode with the letter, the younger generation's text occasions apprehension in the older, not vice versa. And the youth's "breeding" and multivalent "conceiv[ing]" (3, 6), like Wellbred's supposed sexual misconduct, accompany their textual error. Kno'well, like the play in sum, fuses biological generation with literary tensions.

In F's Prologue and the dedication—both absent in Q—Jonson insists upon the endurance of childhood in his own life and in the lives of his creations, denying maturation. His sentiment is not merely that the child is father to the man; that phrasing suggests at least a role for the adult. In the Prologue, the child is not allowed to develop, or be a "father to a man," at all:

THOUGH need make many Poets, and some such
As art and nature have not bettered much;
Yet ours, for want, hath not so loved the stage,
As he dare serve the ill customs of the age:
Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
As, for it, he himself must justly hate.
To make a child, now swaddled, to proceed

Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,

Past threescore years . . .

(1-9)

The condensed aging process described in lines 7-9 has the uncanniness of time-lapse photography, rubbing viewers' noses in their inability to slow the passage of days. A botanical reading of "shoot" ("offshoot"?) implies the presence of a parent plant or seed; in this case, Jonson (8). As the line unfolds, though, the comparatively innocent "shoot" is replaced by the more noxious "weed," with its suggestions of development uncontrolled by any authority. ("[W]eed" presumably refers to clothing, but its proximity to "shoot" invites a vegetable interpretation.) The weeded adult is a rejected growth. The word disavows Jonson's connection to the child grown old whom he has not actually created; the passage see-saws between emphasizing a fantasized tie and denying that tie's reality. For Jonson to turn a child into a man—in a sense, to be a father himself—would involve self-hatred. And that he so abhors the child's change raises the possibility of more at stake than the fear of individual aging or of another's growth. The terror of transformation applies not only to the imagined child of the Prologue, but to Jonson's "age" itself, with its "ill customs" (4), fallen away from some presumably better and perhaps classical past.

The Prologue's "just" hate of the self (6) recalls the "just day" of Jonson's son's death in "On My First Son" (c. 1603), another poem about a child who cannot grow up or old:

My sin was too much hope of thee, loved boy.

Seven years thou wert lent to me, and I thee pay,

Exacted by thy fate, on the just day.

Oh, could I lose all father now![29]

Here, "just" is also "exact"; Jonson's son Benjamin died on his seventh birthday in 1603. But the word's sense of "fair," though ironized, emphasizes the righteousness of Jonson's hypothetical disgust with himself in *Every Man In*'s Prologue. Juxtaposed with the ambiguous desire to "lose all father" in the poem (does Jonson wish to lose his own fatherhood, or the Heavenly Father who takes the son away?), the Prologue's formulation marks a key element in Jonson's relationship with influencing. To create literary offspring who actually change—children who grow older—is so repugnant that Jonson must distance himself from the act with the sort of unempathetic moralizing usually reserved for our judgments of others, even as he unnecessarily imagines himself creating those children. And the resistance to the idea of a child's change infiltrates Jonson's dedication to William Camden in the folio *Every Man In* as well: "[S]ince I am none of those that can suffer the benefits conferred upon my youth to perish with my age," Jonson somewhat grudgingly explains (5-6), he is grateful to his former schoolmaster. In the self-aggrandizing dedication's self-negating phrase—"I am none"—Jonson effaces his adult identity, as was occasionally his habit when writing of Camden. In Epigram 14, Jonson describes him as "most reverend head, to whom I owe / All that I am in arts, all

29. *Ben Jonson: Selected Poems*, ed. Ian Donaldson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 18, ll. 2-5. Other references are parenthetical within the text.

that I know, / (How nothing's that?) . . ."[30] The "reverend" head anticipates the "reverence" Kno'well remembers being paid to elders of dubious merit (2.3.9). In fact, Jonson is so intent on self-deprecation he insults Camden by association. If, having been taught, the student still knows "nothing," perhaps the teacher needs remediation too. But the passage does not precisely suggest anxiety of influence. Rather, it points to Jonson's reluctance to accept his own maturity as an artist.

Epigram 14 also figures Camden as the person "to whom my country owes / The great renown and name wherewith she goes" (3-4). Camden's presence as dedicatee for the 1616 *Every Man In* is especially significant in light of his status as one of England's chief researchers of family lineages and as establisher of a classical genealogy for England (at his suggestion, to be called Britain, from the ostensible founder Brutus).[31] *Every Man In*'s two versions likewise participate in a similar linkage of Italy and England, but whereas Camden played up England's supposed Italian roots, Jonson's revision effaces the Italian origin of his newly English play.[32] The dedication's acknowledgment of the need to remember the past—"It is a frail memory that remembers

30. In *Ben Jonson*, ed. Donaldson, 7, lines 1-3. Other references are parenthetical within the text. Jonson's description of himself as Camden's *Alumnus olim, aeternum Amicus* ("a student once, a friend forever") in a dedication to the first quarto of *Cynthia's Revels* (1601) stands out from the other Camden tributes in its assertion of change.

31. The substitution of "Britain" for "England" was of course supported by the embarrassingly non-English James Stuart. As for Camden, in part because of his research into English genealogies he was appointed Clarenceux King at Arms in 1597; the position involved supervising the College of Heralds in granting arms.

32. Aside from Jonson's personal interests in questions of nationhood, the English were sometimes mocked as derivative. On this point note Jeanne Tillman, "French Cultural Influence in England: the Private Duel" (lecture, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS, April 30, 2004). Also cf. Portia's derision of her English suitor at 1.2. 59. In switching from Italianate Q to English F, then, Jonson's claim to native tradition is already seriously hedged.

but present things" (6-7)—refers most directly to Jonson's childhood relationship with Camden, but it might also serve as a meditation on *Every Man In*'s transformation from quarto to folio. Camden, as the play's figurehead, legitimizes the folio's diminution of Roman influence and serves as paternal counterweight to act 5's Justice Clement (as with *Twelfth Night*, father figures bookend the *Every Man In* folio). Just as the mildly fractious Kno'well and his mildly rebellious son are subordinated to Clement's higher authority, Jonson counters his retreat from a classicized milieu by dutiful recourse to Camden. That the dubiously legitimate judge, explicitly young in *Merchant*, is grandfatherly in *Every Man In* (among F's dramatis personae he is listed as "an old merry magistrate" and Wellbred calls him a "merry old fellow" [3.2.253]) only makes both Kno'wells seem younger. And although the scene in which Kno'well adopts the values of youth shares something with Shylock's kangaroo-court conversion in *The Merchant of Venice*, Kno'well's conversion seems more genuine ("[y]ou have your pardon," he tells Brainworm [5.3.64]).

In 3.1 Brainworm, having disguised himself as a soldier, reveals himself to the surprised Edward, whom he has been tracking:

> BRAINWORM. . . . three or four patches remov'd, I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father—Brainworm.
>
> EDWARD KNO'WELL. Brainworm! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blown thee hither in this shape?

BRAINWORM. The breath o' your letter, sir, this morning; the same that blew you to the Windmill, and your father after you.

EDWARD KNO'WELL. My father?

BRAINWORM. Nay, never start, 'tis true, he has follow'd you over the fields, by the foot, as you would do a hare i'the snow.

(203-212)

Brainworm's remark about being Edward's servant after he is Kno'well's starts the dialogue conventionally enough. The son follows in the father's footsteps. But in the next few lines, absent from Q, the introduction of textuality reverses the usual order: the son's "letter" brings the "father after," following the son instead of being followed. The father's aggressive pursuit indicates his subordination; its necessity betokens vulnerability.[33] The poetic "foot" at 212 continues the literary thread, with the proximity of the pun on "heir" underscoring Jonson's linkage of the literary and the filial. Dryden, discussing the ancients' influence on Jonson, alters the stalking metaphor. He writes, "you can track him everywhere in their snow." Dryden's phrasing implies Jonson's influence on *them*; his marks alter the classical landscape.[34] In his formulation and in

33. Douglas Lanier, discussing "On My First Son" and domesticating the master-slave dialectic, finds Jonson as father "fatally dependent" on his son; he also sees a tradeoff between Jonson's literary filiation and the speaker's fragile paternity in the poem (66). The essay anticipates this one in many respects: Lanier concludes that "[p]atriarchy provided Jonson with one means of understanding and controlling the relations that mark literary authority" (67). See Lanier, "Brainchildren."

34. See John Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, in *The Major Works*, ed. Keith Walker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 70-130: "Ben Jonson . . . was willing to give place to [the ancients] in all things. He was not only a professed imitator of Horace, but a learned plagiary of all the others. You track him everywhere in their snow. . . . I will produce Father Ben to you dressed in all the ornaments and colours of the ancients" (83-84). Dryden had of course read *Every Man in His Humour*; he mentions it in *An Essay*, 111.

Brainworm's too, the son's text holds sway over the father—reason enough, perhaps, for Jonson to write a play about the desire to maintain youth and avoid dependents.

I have already remarked on Jonson's reputation for weak, simplistic characterizations. But although Jonson may lack Shakespeare's "negative capability"—he seems to have its opposite, which ties every speaker and situation to his own concerns—*Every Man In* does develop a complex character. [35] That character is Jonson. His prefatory material in F, and its half-exposed paternal and filial interests, blends with the play's action in a way that belies his reputation as an artist to be appreciated for plot and wit but not for psychological acuity. Jonson's queasiness with social and literary fatherhood in *Every Man In* is no blip in his career; he develops that concern across genres and decades. I have already quoted "On My First Son," with its fusion of the biological son and the literary product (the son is Jonson's "best piece of poetry") and its wish to "lose all father now" (12, 5). Decades later, his lesser-known epigram "To a Friend, and Son" (1630) echoes Jonson's earlier ambivalence about being a father even as it purports to testify to his paternal satisfaction. It substitutes another form of contentment:

> Son, and my friend, I had not call'd you so
> To me; or been the same to you, if show,
> Profit, or chance had made us: but I know,

35. As intuitively appealing as Keats's characterization is, Shakespeare's "negative capability" owes much to our dearth of knowledge about him. The phrase first appeared in a letter to his brothers George and Thomas in 1817. See *The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821*, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958) 1:193.

What, by that name, we each to other owe,
Freedom and truth; with love from those begot:
Wise-crafts, on which the flatterer ventures not.
His is more safe commodity or none:
Nor dares he come in the comparison.
But as the wretched painter, who so ill
Painted a dog, that now his subtler skill
Was, t' have a boy stand with a club, and fright
All live dogs from the lane, and his shop's sight,
Till he had sold his piece, drawn so unlike:
So doth the flatterer with fair cunning strike
At a friend's freedom, proves all circling means
To keep him off; and howsoe'er he gleans
Some of his forms, he lets him not come near
Where he would fix, for the distinction's fear,
For as at distance few have faculty
To judge; so all men coming near, can spy;
Though now of flattery, as of picture, are
More subtle works, and finer pieces far,
Than knew the former ages; yet to life
All is but web and painting; be the strife

Never so great to get them: and the ends,

Rather to boast rich hangings, than rare friends.[36]

The extended analogy between an object of flattery and a poorly painted dog initially seems far-fetched. However, "I had not call'd you so / To me" (1-2) anticipates the later association of the addressee with a dog, "called to" a master. A pronoun ambiguity also subordinates sonhood in 4-5: "we each to other owe, / freedom and truth; with love from those begot." Presumably, "those" are "freedom and truth." In the poem's larger context, though, "those begot" sound like sons. In one reading, then, father and son owe each other freedom and truth, as do friend and friend. Only the son owes love. But ultimately the poem is not invested in fatherhood. The friend-son/son-friend chiasmus of the title and first line gives way to merely "friends" in the last. And filial subordination notwithstanding, Jonson's speaker is actually more invested in his own sonhood than in paternity. The first three lines claim filial status for him as well as for the epigram's addressee: "Son, and my friend, I had not call'd you so / To me; or been the same to you, if show, / Profit, or hance had made us" (1-3). "[S]ame" does not have to refer to "Son" and "friend" or even just to "friend"; we may paraphrase 1-2 as "I wouldn't have called you 'son' and 'friend' or have had the relationship with you that I've had if . . . ." But this reading, though logical, is unsupported by the text. "[S]ame" and "us" imply an absolute equivalence between the speaker and the addressee: each one is a friend, and more surprisingly, each one is a son.

36. *Underwoods* 69, in *The Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. William Gifford (London: Bickers and Son, 1875), 8:446.

Jonson's hunger for sonhood informed his relationship with younger men in conversation as well as in poetry. One would-be protégé whose father had been Jonson's friend in youth told John Aubrey what happened when he "desired to be adopted his [Jonson's] *Son*: 'No, sayd he, 'tis honour enough for me to be your Brother; I am your father's son: 'twas he that polished me, I doe acknowledge it.'"[37] The emphatic doubling of the verb in "doe acknowledge," though perhaps just legalistic, may also be read as intriguingly defensive in a man who championed the plain style. More relevant here is Jonson's renunciation of paternal privilege in favor of filiation. As with *Twelfth Night*, the sibling relationship is a cognitive springboard to the idea of the father, even if for Jonson both sibling and father are metaphorical. And as with *Every Man In*, the text fantasizes not dependents, but dependence.

Jonson's ordering of the 1616 folio *Works* itself, an important marker of the English Renaissance as a discrete literary movement, reifies the concerns I discuss above. As Riggs argues, in excluding his late English comedy *Bartholomew Fair* from the *Works* and putting the classical tragedy *Catiline* last, Jonson wrote a narrative into his oeuvre: "The final transition from *The Alchemist* to *Catiline* takes him out of the native and into the classical tradition and marks his passage from the lesser genre of comedy to the

37. John Aubrey, "Ben Jonson," in *Brief Lives* (1669-1696), ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), 177-180, 178. The son manqué was Benet Hoskyns (or Bennet Hoskins); his father, Richard, was a member of the Inns of Court. Another of Aubrey's entries relays the same anecdote in slightly different words: "Sir Benet told me that one time desiring Mr. Jonson to adopt him for his sonne, No, said he, I dare not: 'tis honour enough for me to be your Brother: I was your Father's sonne, and 'twas he that polished me" ("John Hoskyns," 168-171, 169). The "doe acknowledge" is gone, but "I dare not" underscores the trepidation with which Jonson receives the request. More subtle is the change from "*was* your Father's sonne" in the Hoskyns entry to "*am* your father's son" in the Jonson entry (italics mine). The Jonson entry's version makes the elder Hoskyns' paternity of the poet not transient but permanent.

greater one of tragedy" (225). But the shape of the folio does not actually reflect Jonson's career. In the six years following 1610, Jonson wrote one London comedy and began another. In the year of the folio's publication, Riggs points out, Jonson was on a path "diametrically opposed" to the one represented in it (225). *Every Man In*'s conflicted transition from Q to F is both wrought large and reversed in the 1616 folio's Latinate repackaging of Jonson's increasing artistic Englishness. Despite Jonson's move away from his Roman dramatic base, mimetic dependence on classical predecessors is what gives him authority, his tortuous overhauls suggest.

For late moderns, pairing often suggests equality; for early moderns, hierarchy. *Twelfth Night*'s twinning is perhaps more like our concept of pairing in this regard, but Jonson's doubling in *Every Man In* is more typical of his time. Hierarchical shifts are a defining tension of the mimetic process: the superiority of what is imitated is the quality that inspires imitation, so successful mimesis in a sense destroys the value of its object. Kno'well's erosion of paternal status upon the revelation of Edward's similarity to him—the son lives more or less respectably and marries suitably—parallels the uneasy waning of classical echoes in the folio *Every Man In*. In both cases, the play evinces a reluctance to take on the authoritative mantle of a predecessor: Edward runs from his father to an even more powerfully paternal figure, Kno'well bemoans his fatherhood, and Jonson surrounds the anglicized second version of the play with manifestations of his deference to literary forerunners. And in each case, the similarity between influencer and influenced makes the first appear like the last as much as vice versa. To be an influencing father—as

Plautus and Terence are to Jonson, as Jonson is to younger poets—is eventually to resemble the son. And possibly, as disturbing in *Every Man In* as the infantilization of being a father is the experience of *infantilizing* a father. I would like to suggest that one of the possibilities the play acknowledges and attempts to avoid in its transformation from quarto to folio is that of retroactively influencing one's antecedents. In other words, in recasting the Romans through *Every Man In* Jonson makes the ancients his children, and doesn't altogether want to. Granted, Jonson is sometimes drawn to paternity. The Sons of Ben are by no means entirely rejected. But filiality might motivate this paternity: to be the ideally emulative child of his classical forebears, Jonson must influence others. He must be a good father to be a good son. Likewise, Kno'well and Edward Kno'well cannot be easily distinguished, despite their opposition. They figure Jonson as influenced and Jonson as influencer, both opposites and the same.

Another way of conceptualizing the doubling of a predecessor: Jonson's and Shakespeare's doubles are effigies, with effigies' potential to be images of veneration, contempt, or both. The doubling expresses the doubled object's hold over its copier. It also articulates the copier's power over the original's symbolic import. Just as no one can look at a can of Campbell's tomato soup in quite the same way after seeing Warhol's mocking, sacralizing portraits of it, the plays of Plautus and Terence receive homage from Jonson's work. But their viewers and readers also become more discriminating, centuries after the playwrights can respond no more than soup can. In preferring the second version of his play, Jonson, along with most of his critics and editors, privilege

youth in its literary form. The dramatic progeny strikes us as more worthy of attention than the original. And in writing a new and improved version of *Every Man In*, Jonson temporarily immunizes himself against displacement by another artist. By doubling his play he makes the version of himself that writes the folio his own successor.

Twelfth Night's doubling figures both sexual reproduction and a longing to escape it. *Every Man in His Humour*'s attitude toward procreation is likewise glum—characters display obsessive fears of cuckoldry and a reluctance to parent. But the play interrogates the processes of transmission involved in both family life and artistic inheritance. This disquiet is part of what makes Jonson a quintessentially Renaissance man. In that sense the Renaissance works against itself. At times the forward-looking phrase "early modern" is irrelevant to a discussion of Jonson; his relationship to the Romans is in many ways more of a rebirth, and like any birth, a trauma. The child and the parent collude in the formation of a second identity that changes the first. In a time individuated by the idea of rebirth, and paradoxically, by the necessary dependence on others implicit in that idea, a central task of the artist is picking apart and reweaving the threads that link the period to the past. And the development of metaphors for its provenance and evolution, one of the tasks of *Every Man in His Humour*, is a sine qua non of its notably self-conscious era.[38]

38. Following Jules Michelet (*History of France*, 1855), Jacob Burckhardt, cited in note 15 above, along with Wallace Ferguson (*The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation*, 1948), Erwin Panofsky (*Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, 1960), and Peter Burke (*The Renaissance*, 1964) argues that Renaissance people had a sense of themselves as historically distinct. The term *rinascita*, "rebirth," was first used by Giorgio Vasari in *Le Vite de' Più Eccellenti Pittori Scultori et Architettori* (1550). Though we have no record of Jonson's knowledge of Vasari's phrasing, his collaborator and eventual enemy, Inigo Jones, wrote notes throughout a 1568 edition of Vasari's *Vite*. It is possible that Jonson too was familiar with the ideas of the post-medieval period as a rebirth. See John Newman, "Inigo Jones's Architectural Education before 1614," *Architectural History* 35 (1992): 18-50, 21.

Renaissance literary and dramatic texts are the products of a double age. Even were it not for the classically derived reliance on mimesis that serves as a reason in itself to ruminate on reproductions, the duality inherent in the revivification of classical languages and literary forms makes *Twelfth Night*'s and *Every Man In*'s use of the double as metaphor almost inevitable. It is perhaps also to be expected that a period facing a greater pace of cultural change than the centuries that preceded it would focus on generational tensions. But although both Jonson and Shakespeare figure the connection of past to present in parent and child, Jonson connects doubling and father-child ties much more explicitly than Shakespeare does. *Twelfth Night* comments obliquely on historically specific sources of family strain; *Every Man In* illuminates the broad-spectrum potency of the early modern father-son dyad in selecting it as the lens through which other relationships are made visible. The play's very distance from commentary about locally and historically specific family culture, its ostensible focus on more remote, abstract concerns, paradoxically underscores the utility and perhaps even necessity of the filial and paternal metaphors it uses to represent those concerns. The medium becomes the message. Despite Jonson's representation (frequently, his self-representation) as a writer primarily invested in questions of literary artistry, his decision to embody the mechanics of social transmission in a father and a son ultimately imagines the link between parent and child, not writer and reader, as the primary location of continuity and change for his culture.

Chapter 3

Castrating the Creditor in *The Merchant of Venice*

In 1596, not long before the first production of *The Merchant of Venice*,[1] William Shakespeare's father acquired a coat of arms. Biographical tradition has it –that the playwright underwrote this move up the social ladder.[2] By metaphorically creating his father's social identity, Shakespeare took symbolic control over his place in two hierarchies, those of rank and of family. Reversing the usual procedure process by which one derives social position from one's father, Shakespeare re-parented his parent (and consequently himself, as inheritor of a new position) and was reborn reconstituted as a gentleman. Shakespeare's transformation of familial and social position has left behind traces only of success, and records of the family do not speak of the tensions surrounding such a bid for improved status move, which was one neither unusual nor uncontroversial for the middle ranks in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.[3] But *The Merchant of Venice*

1. See *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. M. M. Mahood, introduction to *The Merchant of Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Introd., 1. Mahood fixes 1596-1598 as the possible composition dates. All following *Merchant* citations are parenthetical and follow this edition.

2. See, for example, Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 36-37. Schoenbaum tells us that John Shakespeare's economic situation, unlike William's, was not healthy enough for him to have applied to the College of Heralds on his own. Too, in 1597 the younger Shakespeare bought one of the most valuable properties in Stratford (Quennell 163).

3. See Lawrence Stone, "Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700," *Past and Present* 33 (Spring 1966): 16-55. Stone reports that in the sixteenth century, conservatives such as heralds claimed that a family could only be gentry after three generations had avoided manual labor, though theory and practice differed considerably (17-18). In the early seventeenth century, the concept of social parity gained popularity, but it also increased animosity toward the upwardly mobile, particularly merchants (38-9). Such wide-scale social tension could hardly lessen any intrafamilial anxieties about moving up in the world. Richard Helgerson, in *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), examines a similar narrative in his discussion of filial rebellion in the writing and lives of authors who

centers on similar desires to alter socioeconomic and familial positions that may have informed and been informed by Shakespeare's purchase of a coat of arms for his father, and it does so with more obvious ambivalence. My aim is not to use the play as a tool for excavating the playwright's psyche, but rather to explore *Merchant* as a contemporary narrative of the difficulty of taking over position from fathers literal and symbolic. The dramatic representation emphasizes tensions that bare historical records of transactions made by Shakespeare and other "new men" perhaps occlude.

My first chapter examined a backward glance to an older iteration of Christianity; this chapter also looks at the insecurities of a comparatively new religion. Several types of indebtedness to parental figures comprise *Merchant*: those of children to literal parents, debtors to creditors, and Christianity to Judaism. This chapter examines how these obligations both replicate and complicate each other as the characters revise (and sometimes just reaffirm) their social positions. The play foregrounds the shaky claim of a newer religion's triumph over an older and shows a homology between this religious strife and generational strife. Even more centrally, its characters' ferocity toward creditors reveals not simply an historically specific hatred of usury, but also a less historically limited unease with the fathers for whom those creditors stand. *Merchant*'s children –combat their filial hostilities by subjecting their creditor/father figures to metaphorical castration. The play suggests, however, that the children's attempts to

peaked before Shakespeare—Gascoigne, Lyly, Greene, Lodge, and Sidney. In the pattern Helgerson explores, filial waywardness is doomed to fail, and the prodigal son plot ends "in punishment rather than in forgiveness" (3). Autobiography aside, *Merchant* is a development in the sixteenth-century prodigal narrative—Shakespeare figures both sons *and* daughters as prodigals, and their flights from paternal encumbrance do not end in a return home.

escape familial and religious obligation are unsuccessful, and that the maligned process of usury and the culturally sanctioned institution of the family are in fact similar in their unproductivity—*Merchant*'s children must either reproduce their fathers' traits, thus confirming paternal power over their identities, or negate themselves altogether. Similarly, usury appears both in this play and in early modern English culture generally as an economic practice that excludes genuine material growth in favor of stagnant fiscal repetition. More simply stated, Shakespeare, with both precedent and antecedent, writes usury as a father-child relationship and father-child relationships as usury. And *Merchant*, especially through Gratiano and Lancelot Gobbo, imagines the connection between Judaism and Christianity as a parent-child tie burdened by uncomfortable debt in an analogy that feeds and feeds on early modern anxiety about the authenticity and genealogy of Christianity.

As one historian writes, the early modern middle and upper ranks were frequently in the situation of "continuing dependence on paternal help,"[4] and the play's upwardly mobile adult children necessarily harbor hostility toward their fathers. Too, in a ~~society~~ culture whose ~~relatively stable~~ hierarchy of rank is prescriptively if not always actually stable,[5] the socially ambitious and discontent ~~will~~ may easily resent the parent from whom an imprisoning social status derives. In many Shakespearean plays, family pathology correlates with maternal absence. In the *Merchant* corollary, tension arises from interactions with fathers who, from the Rialto or the grave, exercise their wills too

4. *English Family Life, 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries*, ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 199.

5. Stone, "Social Mobility," 38-55 passim.

thoroughly for their children's taste. But hating one's father is a guilt-ridden occupation, unacceptable in a patriarchal order (or in any in which parents provide a child's material support). Bassanio, Portia, Jessica, and friends displace anxieties of paternal influence onto creditors, who materialize and encapsulate the child's obligations to fathers in the creditor-debtor economic bond. Not all the Christians are fiscal debtors to Shylock, among the several creditors in the play, but ~~but~~ they need not be observably constrained by a usurer in order to transfer anxieties and resentments onto one. Lawrence Stone has detailed the extent of the English aristocracy's recourse to usurers after 1585.[6] Portia, although not a vocal debtor, is a usurer-attacking gentry character at a time when the gentry's upper segments were only too familiar with creditors.

Merchant's tensions over debts and displacements of filial resentment culminate in the creditor's metaphorical castration, suggesting hostility toward the symbolic father's reproductive power. Displacing resentment of fathers onto Shylock and Antonio and desiring the creditors' unsexing, or here, the destruction of their ability to be literal fathers, *Merchant*'s filial and financial dependents (Bassanio, Portia, Jessica, Lorenzo, Gratiano, Lancelot) fantasize selves free of social inscription. The debtors' dislike of financial, physical, and psychological creditors is part of a desire for an autonomous, even autochthonous, social identity.[7] C. L. Barber wrote that Shakespearean comedy is

6. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 183, 377, 529-543.

7. In the past two decades historicist critics have questioned the use of psychoanalytic perspectives in studying early modern culture. Though the desire for autonomy I discuss here might lead to an explication in terms of Freud's family romance, which features in its most common version the emotional replacement of the child's parents by figures of higher social status (as Portia, to a degree, does Bassanio's), one need not view this explanation as ahistorical. Rather, it depends on particular social

about "freeing sexuality [hence a large part of modern identity] from the ties of family."[8] In this play, however, sexuality in the form of marriage goes along with the displacement of resentment as a means of freeing socioeconomic identity from the ties of family. The logic of displacement, Freudian or Shakespearean, is not strict: one redirects emotion from inconvenient objects onto convenient ones.[9] The process is more likely to occur, perhaps, if the displacer is at the center of his or her universe, enough so that anyone may serve as a supplementary emotional target—for such a person, almost all others are equally Not Self, even if they can be subdivided into different categories. At our first glimpse of Portia, for one, the social hub of Belmont describes herself as "scanted . . . and hedged"[10] by her father (2.1.17-8) and makes a blanket evaluation of her suitors as subhuman ("sponge," "beast," and so on) even as she purports to describe their particulars (1.2.31-81). And on our introduction to melancholically self-absorbed

structures common both in sixteenth-century England and in Freud's Vienna. See Sigmund Freud, "Family Romances," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1966-74), 9:237-41.

In *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), Louis Montrose notes that "claims . . . for the autogeny of men are frequently articulated in the Shakespearean canon" (144). In *Merchant*, though, such claims extend to both sexes.

8. "'Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget': Transformation in *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Survey* 22 (1969): 59-67, 61.

9. Freud loosely defines displacement as a process in which "ideas which originally had only a *weak* charge of intensity take over the charge from ideas which were originally intensely cathected" (italicized original). See *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in *The Standard Edition* 4: 177. In discussing displacement in dreams Freud often mentions visual representability—this quality, he argues, makes certain objects and events ideal for symbolizing situations and emotions that are not so easily depicted (5:339-40). In the case of creditors who stand for fathers, I think what we have is *social* representability. The tradition of openly hating usurers is comfortably established, whereas resentment of fathers is common but taboo.

10. Shakespeare made a habit of using the word "scant" in contexts of familial tension and metaphorical castration. Cf. *King Lear*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton, 1997), 2.4.166-70, when Lear compares Goneril to Regan: "'Tis not in thee / To grudge my pleasures, to *cut off my train*, / To bandy hasty words, to *scant my sizes*, / And in conclusion, to oppose the bolt / Against my coming in" (my emphasis).

Antonio, he addresses two intimates only in the plural "you," making no verbal discrimination between them (1.1.2, 62-4). Although *Merchant*'s inhabitants make sharp distinctions between groups, the play itself encourages us to consider individuals within those groups as interchangeable—Solanio, Salerio, and Salarino are difficult to separate for readers or for editors. And no doubt displacement is an even more useful mechanism when addressing the root of one's anxieties is impossible, either because focusing on that source is socially inappropriate or because the source of tension is a structure rather than an individual. Both of these conditions existed in early modern parent-child relationships.[11] Granted, financial debt in itself can produce hostility, regardless of familial concerns. But it is unclear that Shylock is an unusually demanding creditor for taking interest, despite his debtors' complaints. As *Merchant* critics and editors have noted, a rate of up to ten per cent was both legal and common in England by 1572,[12] and

11. Marc Shell hints at the idea of the creditor-father blur in the play, citing *Merchant*'s dramatization of the "commensurability (even identity) of men and money." If men and money are identical, then men who are defined solely by the monetary nature of the obligations they help create ("creditors") are difficult to separate from men who are defined by other sorts of obligations as well (in this case, "fathers"). Shell also sees "[g]eneration [as] the principal topic" of the play, but his reading focuses on the process of generation (production) rather than on the idea of generation (older or younger, parent or child) as a personal characteristic. See Shell, *Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 48.

12. See John W. Draper, "Usury in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Modern Philology* 33, no. 1 (Summer 1935): 37-47, 41, for a summary of Tudor interest laws. Also see Stone, "Economic Change," chap. 4 of *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 129-98. Stone writes that sixteenth-century anti-interest sentiment was strong enough to keep most of the landed from taking it (529), but not strong enough to keep the leading city merchants from leaving off trade and lending money instead, even when the former was highly profitable. James Shapiro, in *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), notes that John Shakespeare was twice accused of violating usury laws and only fined for the violation on one of the two occasions (256, n. 35). The inconsistency indicates the equanimity with which Elizabethans could view usury, and the status of Shakespeare's father as a literal usurer suggests the play's association of usury and fatherhood.

five per cent was legal in Venice by the sixteenth century's end.[13] Shylock's rate is unclear. What is clearer is that obligations to parents and creditors in *Merchant* are similar enough ~~so~~ that the emotions produced by a relationship with the first feed into the emotions felt for the second.

The elision of the desired space between father and lender also grows from a more general confusion of boundaries in *Merchant*. The play's English Italians, alternately threatened and intrigued by slippages in their ostensibly strict system of divisions between Jew and Christian, man and woman, and especially creditor and father, do sometimes attempt to build stable oppositional pairings *within* the creditor and father groups. These separations are likewise unstable. The inhabitants of Belmont and Venice perceive as two internally contrasting dyads the good father/bad father set (Portia's wisely containing father and Jessica's unwisely controlling father) and the good creditor/bad creditor set (friendly lender Antonio and cruel usurer Shylock). The contrasts set up between the members of each pair blur under scrutiny. Though Nerissa refers to Portia's father as "ever virtuous," a "holy m[a]n" (1.2.23), his virtues remain unexplored in the play. Apart from the large estate the apparently untitled man possessed—perhaps an indication of business acumen—the only possible evidence of appealing qualities is his forethought in planning the casket game to retain posthumous control over his daughter's marriage. But this plan is questionable as evidence of his moral rectitude, regardless of sixteenth- or twenty-first-century auditors' feelings about women's freedom

13. Mahood 15.

to choose their own marital partners or about Bassanio's fitness as a husband. Even Nerissa, who is favorably disposed toward Portia's father, presents his goodness as evidence for the wisdom of the game and not vice-versa. As for the creditors, Antonio's rhetorical query, "when did friendship take / A breed of barren metal of his friend?" (1.3.125-26) makes one wonder if the money he lends out "gratis" (line 36) is only available to intimates or people with whom he wants to form an unbreakable economic/emotional bond. The psychological surcharge, as we see in Bassanio's ambivalence toward him, can be at least as onerous as Shylock's interest.[14]

The Christians and children treat creditors, Jewish or Christian, as men whose powers of not just monetary but even human generation must be attacked, whose symbolic place in the reproductive order must be altered through verbal castration. Such castration works in two ways. The "unmanning" can make the creditor/father more like a generous (or relatively economically powerless) mother. More centrally in *Merchant*, it denies the creditor *any* position as literal or symbolic parent, privileged over any child as that child's originator.[15] The imagined castration is an essay at making the creditor/father

14. As is demonstrated by Jan Lawson Hinely in "Bond Priorities in *The Merchant of Venice*," *SEL* 20, no. 2 (1980): 217-39. Hinely also examines different sorts of obligations in the play, but apart from a brief discussion of Antonio's gilding/guilting generosity (229) does not discuss the ways in which the bonds feed on each other.

15. See Leslie A. Fiedler in *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972) for a discussion of the myth of Jews, not Christians, as castrators (123-5). Also see Shapiro 2, 114.

The play is concerned with the boundary between man and not man in a variety of ways—Shylock is called a variety of canine names, the County Palatine a "death's-head," the Neapolitan suitor a "colt," the French "no man" who may only "pass for a man," the English only a "man's picture," the German a "sponge" and "little better than a beast" (1.2.43, 34, 49, 46, 59, 71-3). Only for Shylock and Antonio, though, is the alternative so often not *male* instead of not human. Ian Maclean notes that pre-seventeenth–century Aristotelian and Galenic theory held that women differed from men in their physical incompleteness, lacking the heat to produce external genitalia (*The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study*

figure *not* always ontologically prior, to erase the marks that reveal him the creator of the dependent's ~~–~~existence and social position. For Antonio, the others' transference of hostilities aimed at parental figures ~~s–~~is enough in itself to produce the castration references, but for Shylock, the Aristotelian (and eventually Baconian) association of moneylending at interest with unnatural and undesirable reproduction comes into play as well, the common analogy reinforcing the link between the separate but blending obligations toward parents and creditors. In the first book of *The Politics*, Aristotle writes,

> The trade of the petty usurer is hated with most reason: it makes a profit from currency itself . . . . Currency came into existence as a means of exchange; usury tries to make it increase. This is the reason why it got its name; for as the offspring resembles its parent, so the interest [Aristotle's *tokos*] bred by money is the principal which breeds it, and it may be called 'currency the son of currency.' Hence we can understand why, of all modes of acquisition, usury is the most unnatural.[16]

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in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], 28-46). By around 1600, the uterus had come to be seen as an interesting organ in its own right, but "the *difference* of sex retain[ed] the associations of [genital] deprivation, and play[ed] an important part in the infrastructure of Renaissance thought" (44-45). Thomas Laqueur (*Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* [Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1990]), also reports the Aristotelian and Galenic conception of castrated men as essentially like women (28, 31). And Laura Levine, discussing transvestite theater, argues that early moderns feared that the self was female at root (*Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994]). A castrated Antonio or Shylock, then, may not be just an altered man, but a man who has been altered so that he is more like a woman.

16. *The Politics*, trans. Ernest Barker, rev. ed. R. F. Stalley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 30. Shell (50, n. 12) and others have noted Shakespeare's similar allusion in *Measure for Measure*,

Tokos is both "interest" and "offspring." Shylock himself acknowledges the cultural connection between sexual and monetary generation in his comparison of Jacob's breeding rams and multiplying gold, and Antonio follows up on the allegory:

> ANTONIO. Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
>
> SHYLOCK. I cannot tell, I make it breed as fast.
>
> (1.3.87-8)

The procreatively suggestive "breeding" half of the breeding-lending metaphor, originally important primarily for its function in criticizing usury, becomes the central focus of Shakespeare's examination of the connection between the two, as I will demonstrate. *Merchant* reverses the direction of Aristotle's metaphor ~~to make~~ discomfort with what was often perceived as an "unnatural" economic institution, usury, reveal ~~a~~ chafing under the constraints of what ~~most~~ early moderns considered ~~a~~ a natural structure ~~structure~~, the parent-child tie.[17]

Non-Shakespearean as well as Shakespearean drama features father-substitutes who are usurers. Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, for example, has a usurer-uncle, as does Jonson's *The Staple of News* (c. 1625), the topic of chapter four. The

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in which Pompey refers to the "two usuries," sexual and monetary (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. [New York: Norton, 1997], 3.1.262).

17. Exactly what sort of tie this is has been a matter for debate. Philippe Ariès (*Centuries of Childhood*: *A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick [New York: Vintage, 1965]); , Lawrence Stone (*The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977]), and Lloyd deMause (in *The History of Childhood*, ed. deMause [1974; Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995]), among others, have claimed that it was rather weak for most early moderns. However, historians such as Houlbrooke, Keith Wrightson, Alan Macfarlane, and Linda Pollock (*A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children over Three Centuries* [Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1987] and *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983] have demonstrated that a strong bond between parents and children was expected and common, though of course exceptions were numerous.

dramatic pattern is part of a broader cultural dynamic. Early modern English parent-child relationships were, as they have been in many other places and times, centered on an occasionally uneasy combination of emotional and financial bonds. For these families, the pragmatic components of the relationship and the sense of money *owed* were perhaps ~~less embarrassing~~ even more of a concern than they are for their twenty-first-century counterparts. ~~Ralph Houlbrooke quotes seventeenth~~-century diarist Henry Newcome ~~on~~ the death of a friend's son: "there is now an end of a deal of money, good education, fine parts, many expectations."[18] Present-day readers may find some of Newcome's reasons for mourning the death of a child better unspoken, but his contemporaries would not have. Parents of his time often vocalized a desire for repayment, financial or otherwise: in a 1669 sermon, Ralph Josselin requested, "Oh then children, requite your parents for the cost they have laid out about you, follow their counsells, & chear up their sperits in their gray haires."[19] Even if the "cost" is not pecuniary (and there is no particular reason to doubt it, given the materiality of "laid out"), the economic metaphor is telling, and its placement as the first element in Josselin's list even more so.

The nexus of parent-child relationships and fiscal owing also appears in contemporary poetry—Jonson's "On My First Son" features a common variation on the link: "Seuen yeeres tho'wert lent to me, and I thee pay / Exacted by thy fate, on the iust

18. Henry Newcome, qtd. in Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (London: Longman, 1984), 188.

19. Ralph Josselin, qtd. in Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, a Seventeenth-Century Clergyman: An Essay in Historical Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 82.

day."[20] Likewise, the second stanza of Henry King's "On two Children dying of one Disease, and Buryed in one Grave" (1664) puts the loss of children not just in terms of money, but specifically in terms of debt:

> You Pretty Losses, that revive the fate
> Which in your Mother, Death did Antedate,
> O let my high-swol'n Grief distill on You
> The saddest dropps of a parentall Dew:
> You ask no other *Dowre* then what my eyes
> Lay out on your untimely Exequyes:
> When once I have *discharg'd* that mournful *skoare*,
> Heav'n hath decreed you ne're shall *cost* mee more.
> Since you release, and quitt my *borrow'd trust*,
> By taking this *Inheritance* of Dust.[21] [my italics]

In King's rendering, the debt relationship is multiform: the mention of the requested "dowre" suggests that the children would be recipients of parental largesse, debtors even in death, but the speaker then implies that the "dowre" is in fact owed to them. Ultimately, the children themselves are borrowed from heaven. The hairpin curves of metaphysical conceit reveal an anger that takes its force not only from the double

20. Ben Jonson, *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925-63), 8:41.

21. Henry King, *Poems*, ed. Margaret Crum (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 72. Qtd. in Raymond Anselment, "'The Teares of Nature': Seventeenth-Century Parental Bereavement," *Modern Philology* 91, no. 1 (1993): 6-53, 42-44.

tragedy, but also from the sense of obligation and called-in debt, of high-interest loans that must be paid back to Father-Usurer above.

Political and religious essayists, too, used the father-creditor symbol in ways suggesting the familial debt that early moderns could not help but rack up. In a typical example, John Swan's 1640 tract lauding paternalism in its familial, religious, and political forms is called *Redde Debitum* ["Pay Back the Debt"]*; or, a Discourse in Defence of Three Chiefe Fatherhoods*. Even anti-monarchist Henry Parker, whom one might assume to be less patriarchal than Swan, wrote in 1642 that "the son is wholly a debtor to his father."[22] ~~T~~he kind of ~~indebtedness children felt toward parents~~, ~~then,~~ could be ~~-~~either ~~-~~metaphorically or actually like a ~~debt~~ to any other creditor: hence the ease of the slide from resentment of the father to hatred of the usurer.

Not all parents could be equated with usurers. Ralph Houlbrooke describes early modern mothers as ~~being the "softer"~~ parents, especially for boys: "Mothers were pictured as being more indulgent than fathers. Many autobiographers dwelt longer on their mothers or remembered them with greater affection."[23] There is less autobiographical material from women, but Houlbrooke makes a case for mother~~s' bonds with their~~ daughter bonds as ~~being~~ even stronger than mother-son ties, and other historians, too, find that conflicts of authority were more likely to involve fathers than

22. Henry Parker, *Observations upon Some of His Majesties Late Answers and Expresses* (London, 1642), 18. Quoted in Gordon J. Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought: The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes Especially in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 100.

23. Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, 182-3.

mothers.[24] In any case, mothers had less material power over their children than did fathers. Ironically, this gender inequality contributed to a harmonious family dynamic in the relative lack of tension between female parent and male child: "Men's memories of their mothers were much less often scarred by the major conflicts of adolescence and young adulthood . . . in which fathers frequently assumed the role of major adversary. Mothers seldom appeared in this light . . . ."[25] English women's ~~relatively~~ comparatively insignificant economic role when it came to inheritance, higher education, dowries, and other aspects of their children's lives is embodied in the eagerness with which *Merchant*'s debtors and children symbolically emasculate Antonio in particular, turning him from a threatening, rank-giving father into a self-sacrificing mother.[26]

Antonio and Bassanio's much-discussed relationship is in the least controversial definition one of friendship, but a familial dynamic is present too. In *Il Pecorone*, the fourteenth-century Ser Giovanni Fiorentino novella that is the primary source for *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio is Ansaldo, who adopts orphaned godson Giannetto (Shakespeare's Bassanio).[27] The family tie is not entirely suppressed in the play—Solanio's reference to Bassanio as Antonio's "most noble kinsman" (1.1.57) leaves room

24. Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, 187. See also Joseph E. Illick, "Child-Rearing in Seventeenth-Century England and America" in *The History of Childhood*, ed. Lloyd deMause (New York: Psychohistory, 1974), 303-350, 322.

25. Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, 184-85.

26. Anthony Fletcher accepts Amy Erickson's view of early modern women's economic status: "[a]lthough women exercised more power over property than has been allowed, the legal system at the core of early modern patriarchy, Erickson concludes, 'kept women firmly subordinate.' Individual men ran the system with the dedicated intention of preserving this status quo" (Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995]; Erickson quotation from Amy Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* [London: Routledge, 1993], 19, see also Erickson 223-28).

27. See Mahood, ed., 2-5, for a description of Shakespeare's use of *Il Pecorone*.

for a biological link. Many studies of *The Merchant ~~of Venice~~* claim either that Antonio's affections are ~~parental/avuncular/~~paternal or that they are sexual,[28] but the two need not be ~~–~~mutually exclusive. While Antonio's "[m]y purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlocked to your occasions" (1.1.137-38) may have erotic intent, the definition of "purse" as scrotum that readers occasionally cite as evidence of Antonio's sexual investment in Bassanio also lets us read the offer in terms of parenting.[29] Genitals that are used *for* another person can function not just erotically but also in the ~~–~~production of another, the conception of a child. Bassanio eagerly picks up on the filiation suggestion, framing his request for money as the need of a very young dependent: "I urge this childhood proof / Because what follows is pure innocence" (1.1.143-4). One might read Bassanio's fairly unconvincing reference to innocence as a means of making Antonio feel guilty for whatever half-concealed motivations his previous financial assistance might have had, revenge for the compromising erotic implications of the purse-and-person combination. However, the language of childhood can also carry with it the expectation that the auditor will behave as a responsible, care-providing adult—in short, as a parent.

28. For a short list of critics who view Antonio's emotional investment in Bassanio as primarily sexual, see Joseph Pequigney, "The Two Antonios and Same-Sex Love in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*," *ELR* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 201-221, 201, n. 1; and Steve Patterson, "The Bankruptcy of Homoerotic Amity in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 9-32, 10, n. 3.

29. Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy: A Literary and Psychological Essay and a Comprehensive Glossary* (New York: Dutton, 1969), s.v. "purse." Gordon Williams cites three Shakespearean locations outside *Merchant* for the "scrotum" meaning but also finds that purse means "vagina" in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 1.3.61. Either meaning suggests reproductivity (*A Glossary of Shakespeare's Sexual Language* [London: Athlone, 1997].)

The castration references surrounding Antonio—his own label as a "wether" (4.1.114), or castrated sheep, the threatened removal of flesh,[30] the final location outside the ~~play's~~ band of men who boast of their potency—are initially part of an experience of the family in *Merchant* that sees the child's relationship with the female parent as less threatening than that with the male. Ultimately, they are a complete rejection of Antonio's powers of social reproduction. The flesh to be removed is ostensibly not phallic: the bond says "[n]earest his heart" (4.1.250), and Shylock unnecessarily seconds Portia's "lay bare your bosom" with "[a]y, his breast" (248). But Portia also repeatedly refers to the flesh as something not to be cut out, but to be "cut off" (4.1.228, 298, 320), as does Shylock (1.3.143). Antonio, then, is not simply an auto-castrato but rather a character who accepts emasculation at the hands of others. The phallic quality of "flesh," however, does not exclude the word's maternal function, the potential for motherly nurture implicit in "bosom" and "breast." More specifically, "flesh" refers to Bassanio. Bassanio is what is "nearest Antonio's heart." And Bassanio's seemingly empty offer, "The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all / Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood" turns out to come to fruition, if only we substitute Shylock with Portia, whose "fleece" aligns her with the Jew/Iewe/ewe as well as with Antonio's unmanned sheep (4.1.12-3, 1.2.169). As Portia commands, Antonio loses no blood, but he does lose "fair flesh" in the person of his friend/love interest/creditor/symbolic child (1.3.143).

30. Shapiro notes that the Geneva Bible and other late sixteenth-century sources often use the word "flesh" instead of "penis" (122).

Antonio's "unlocked person" of act 1 (person as "body," not just the more general "self") is at once homoerotic and maternal. The state of unlockedness implies treasure within made accessible—his body is a linguistic precursor to the caskets Freud identified with death, the wife, and the womb, and like them, it contains the potential for heterosexual union and reproduction.[31] In the trail of exchange ~~which~~ that weaves throughout the play, Antonio's open body has the pound of flesh ~~which~~ that gets Bassanio the money to travel to Venice and guess the correct casket, which wins him Portia, her "ring," and her putative ability to bear "the first boy" of Gratiano's wager (3.2.213). Unlike Portia, Antonio actually does stand for sacrifice, in a parturitional chain of flesh that suffers in order to produce more flesh. "I once did lend my body for his wealth," he says (5.1.249). But he finishes the sentence with "[w]hich but for him that had your husband's ring / Had quite miscarried" (250-51). The subject of "miscarried" is ambiguous—it could be the wealth of the previous line or the general situation. But the proximity of "body" suggests the loss of a child, and Antonio's phrasing makes him a vulnerable expectant mother or a child himself.[32] Portia takes over his maternal claims after she relinquishes her legal knowledge, telling him in front of Bassanio that she has "delivered" him (4.1.412). Her wording simultaneously acknowledges Antonio's maternal giving forth of Bassanio's flesh to her (she has "delivered" Antonio of Bassanio) and positions *her* as mother ("delivering" as actually giving birth). Even in the final act she refers to the Belmont estate as "my house," where the feckless child-husband

31. Freud, "The Theme of the Three Caskets," in *The Standard Edition*, 12:291-301.

32. Obstetrical uses of "miscarry" appear as early as 1527 (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "miscarry").

Bassanio does not preside, but resides. T~~he~~ merchant, ever aware of shifting values, adjusts his assessment of his now maternally dependent role: "Sweet lady, you have given me life and living" (5.1.286).[33]

Despite Antonio's initial social fecundity, *Merchant* eventually neutralizes all of his perceived parental power over Bassanio. In the trial scene, he compares himself to a "ewe" who "bleat[s] for the lamb," but forty lines later, he has become the "tainted wether of the flock . . . the weakest kind of fruit" (4.1.74, 114-5), first emasculated and maternalized and then stripped even of the maternal connection. (The "weakest fruit" reference indicates a self-perceived feminization, an inadequate one such as that Gratiano voices when he warningly compares Antonio to a "maid not vendible" [1.1.112].)[34] And Bassanio, like Caliban, seeks a new master (mistress) who may allow him more freedom. He transfers allegiance to Portia, another sometimes masculine, sometimes feminine figure, and ~~Portia's~~ ensuing munificence makes Antonio dependent, just as his has made Bassanio dependent earlier. Though threatening, Portia is a safer sort of emotional/financial creditor. Apparently of Bassanio's generation, and as his wife, legally

33. Leonard Tennenhouse also reads Portia as placing herself in a parental role ("The Counterfeit Order of *The Merchant of Venice*," in *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980], 54-69, 65). Marilyn L. Williamson suggests that in Shakespeare's comedies the female object of wooing takes the place of the parent in the prodigal son pattern (*The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies* [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986], 33).

34. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, in *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), notes biblical comparisons between fruit and *male* organs (149). But more commonly in Renaissance iconography, fruit is female. Gordon Williams cites *Pericles* 1.1.128, in which Antiochus describes his daughter as "this fair Hesperides, with golden fruit" (s.v. "fruit"). The first definition Williams cites for "fruit," that of "foetus" or "offspring," suggests the infantilism of Bassanio's dependence on Portia.

secondary, she cannot claim to have created him, to have been responsible for his sucucccess.

Bassanio ~~wishes to be not within~~ a social system, but above it. ~~His~~ need to borrow from an infantilizing lender is an ironic result of denying parentally derived financial limits: the waste of patrimony that he speaks of in 1.1.121-33 ("How much I have disabled mine estate / By something showing a more swelling port / Than my faint means would grant continuance") is first an effort to revise his inherited social status upwards and then an effacement of the last traces of his parents.[35] The trade of Antonio for Portia brings a milder form of dependence, one tempered by the gender imbalance that favors husbands in property and inheritance laws as well as in cultural assumptions about male superiority.

Merchant's emasculation processes vary according to the victim's creed. Though the castration implied by the threat to remove the pound of flesh is temporarily transmuted into ~~his~~ Antonio's quasi-feminine generative potential, Shylock's treatment by Jessica and her new Christian cohort gets ~~no~~ little recompense.[36] Shylock—literal, financial, and religious parent—is entirely more threatening than Antonio. Early in the trial scene the Duke calls Shylock "stony," but the adjective loses force, since Shylock loses his stones to Jessica and Lorenzo forever (3.5.4). In taking Shylock's stones, ring,

35. George E. Rowe Jr. argues that "[t]raditionally, prodigality is a denial of heritage" ("Prodigal Sons, New Comedy, and Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*," *ELR* 7, no. 1 [Winter 1977]: 90-107, 101). See also Frank Whigham, who reads prodigality as the rejection of family in *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (*Seizures of the Will in Early Modern English Drama*, [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 160-180).

36. Shylock's castration has precedent in the early modern Christian image of the feminized Jewish man, whose supposedly leaky, menstrual body Shapiro discusses (37-38, 108).

ducats, and daughter, *Merchant*'s Christians not only betray fear of debts to fiscal creditors and economic/emotional resentment of parents. T~~hey~~, and ~~especially Lancelot Gobbo, on whom more later~~, also reveal anxiety about Christian culture's indebtedness to Judaism.[37] The play's swing from Old Testament justice to the New Testament mercy, for example, is not entirely successful. In the trial, as others have noted, Portia's appeal to mercy and her microscopically close reading of the law~~s~~ only work through an ~~especially harsh application~~ of justice,[38] and in the Christians' effort to valorize the newer religion and younger figures over the older, they cannot forget that the new and young originate~~s~~ in the old. As the non-fictional Christian John Foxe preached in 1578, though Jews "murdered Christ . . . , [t]he very first yssues of our Christian faith sprang out of that stocke."[39] Puritans were not the only clerics to preach about what they saw as Christianity's vexed origins: in 1542 a vicar exclaimed to his parishioners, "I cannott see by noo poynt of my learnyng but that the fayth shalbe taken frome us and gyven to the Jewys; for wee bee the Gentylles, and the children of unpromyse and they bee the children of Israell and children of promysse."[40] "Judaizing" was considered a serious

37. Although David S. Katz, in *The History of the Jews in England 1485-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) writes that "references to ancient Israelites did not automatically remind [Puritans] of contemporary Jews" (109), he does acknowledge that "the precondition for the readmission of the Jews to England was the revival of Hebrew studies in the first half of the sixteenth century" (110). Clearly, there was an early modern awareness of contemporary Jews' status as the practitioners of a religion with connection to Christianity.

38. See, for example, Richard H. Weisberg, "Antonio's Legalistic Cruelty: Interdisciplinarity and *The Merchant of Venice*," *College Literature* 25, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 12-20, 13. See also Fiedler, 31.

39. John Foxe qtd. in Draper, 37, n. 2.

40. W. H. Hale, ed. *A Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Cases Extending from the Year 1475 to 1640, Extracted from the Act-Books of Ecclesiastical Courts in the Diocese of London Illustrative of the Discipline of the Church of England* (London, 1847), 131-32; qtd. in John Fines,

problem in early seventeenth-century England, with several Christians imprisoned for their adoption of Jewish ways. Josselin, in mid-century, even dreamed that the secretary of state had "turned Jew."[41]

Merchant's fears of Judaizing are subtler. The glee with which Lorenzo and Gratiano speak of "gentle" Jessica (2.4.19, 34, 2.6.52) is undercut by Lorenzo's "my father Jew" (2.5.26), and Gratiano's unpleasant trial-scene postscript points to religious as well as secular generational tension:

> In christening shalt thou have two godfathers:
> Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more
> To bring thee to the gallows, not to the font.
>
> (4.1.394-6)

Shylock, a "godfather" himself as a member of an older generation and an older religion, must be rendered the Christians' spiritual child (baptism and godparents usually being reserved for infants) instead of their progenitor. Everything taken from him represents his generative potential, from his daughter to the unnaturally breeding ducats to the ring her mother gave him.[42] Shylock himself puts the process in terms that simultaneously allude to virility, wealth, descendants, and religion: "You take my house when you do take the

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"'Judaising' in the Period of the English Reformation—The Case of Richard Bruern," *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 21 (1968), 323-26, 323.

41. Qtd. in Shapiro, 7. On English Judaizing, see Shapiro, 20-26.

42. Lynn Enterline, in *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), calls Shylock "a castrated man or a weird kind of mother" (232) and cites Solanio's 3.1.242-5 commentary on Jessica's departure as evidence for Shylock's maternal identity: "And Shylock for his own part knew the bird was fledged, and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam" (237). Whatever Shylock's "own part" is, though, he is a non-reproductive mother if he is a mother at all. Unlike Antonio, he tries to block erotic union, and his offspring denies his influence.

prop / That doth sustain my house" (4.1.372-3). The "prop" is at once genitally and financially suggestive ("property"), and includes Jessica too, who is likewise a means to extend Shylock's lineage, to sustain his house.[43] The "house" suggests a literal home, a family line, and a religious domain (the "house of God"). To possess religious authenticity, the Christians cannot admit any kind of Judaic production, and Shylock recognizes the multiple significance of their actions.

The father-child relationship, of course, is involved in a central distinction between Judaism and Christianity. In Christian theology, Father and Son are not always distinguishable after Christ's ascension. However, Jewish theology rejects the belief that the Christian Son is a son at all. The Jewish God's sonlessness, some early modern Jews argued, was a marker of his power: as one living in England in the 1580s replied when asked if he believed in Christ, "What needeth the almighty God to have a son, is He not almighty?"[44] In this formulation, a son is merely an appendage that reveals the weaknesses of the father. Gratiano, aggressively conceiving of himself as a patriarchal figure whose relationship to his metaphorical son Shylock bolsters his own power, sets a Christian paradigm over a Jewish one, thereby symbolically denying the Christian debt to Judaism and his own subjection to forebears.[45] Gratiano's baptismal-funereal phrasing ("thou shouldst have had ten more / [godfathers] to bring thee to the gallows, not to the

43. Freud's claim that the baby represents a woman's substitute for the phallus is well-known, but here the substitution process seems to apply to men too.

44. See Israel Abrahams, "Joachim Gaunse: A Mining Incident in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth," *The Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 4 (1901): 83-101. Qtd. in Shapiro 75.

45. Shell argues that "Judaism . . . emphasizes the importance of bloodlines, and Christianity . . . deemphasizes it" (61). Judaism and Christianity also weight the relative importance of father and son differently within those bloodlines: Judaism emphasizes the father; Christianity, the son.

font" [4.1.395-6]), associates fathers, and not just religious ancestors, with death as much as with birth. Shylock's imminent conversion easily leads to the idea of godfathers, but godfathers also lead to the idea of literal immobility. The threatening morbidity of Gratiano's play on the executioner "godfathers" and the word's implication of the father's absolute power (father=God)- also implies a fear of social immobility inherent in the awareness of one's parents' place in a relatively fixed system of rank, as well as in systems of gender, as for Portia, and religion, as for Jessica. Gratiano's image of forebears who trail frozenness and death in their wake repeats the idea in his act 1 question to Antonio: "Why should a man whose blood is warm within / Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?" (1.1.83-4). (Gratiano's repetitiveness indicates that the fear of not being able to break out of a prior pattern is valid, in his case.) ~~Even~~ Bassanio's apparently throwaway musing upon the gold casket—"Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee" (3.2.102)—suggests a father whose economic traits literally paralyze his child, turning her into gold.[46] ~~Likewise,~~ Portia's father's will similarly limits his golden-haired daughter's options to being won at the casket game or dying "as chaste as Diana" (1.2.87), frozen but presumably still rich.

Not only is Shylock an uneasy figure for the Christians in his faith, one prior to theirs, he also provides a distasteful counterexample to the Christians' wish to escape the father—and a suggestion of its futility—in his verbal communion with past "parents." "O father Abram," he apostrophizes before Antonio and Bassanio (3.3.153), and he swears

46. Shell also makes this point (58).

"[b]y Jacob's staff," a reminder of his own "prop" (2.5.35). More to the point, he sonically identifies himself with Jacob, supposed father of the Jews:

> This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
>
> As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
>
> The third possessor; *ay, he* was the third—
>
> (1.3.64-66, my emphasis)

"Ay" sounds like "I," and as Shell writes, "I" is what actually appears in the Folio.[47] Shylock is a worst-case scenario for the Christians. His decision to align himself vertically with his forefathers prevents him from achieving acceptance by, or even safety from, his Venetian contemporaries. Too, he suggests the idea of the dangerous father by calling "holy" a patriarch who nearly slaughters his son. And the Christians' need to castrate Shylock extends further than family and rank, as the religion-themed conversation of Lancelot Gobbo, often ignored in critical treatment of the play, shows. In Lancelot's account Shylock's fatherhood is at once biological, fiscal, and religious. A Jew, Shylock represents a spiritual tradition that spawned the Christianity that despises it.

Gobbo, who inherits the lowest status in *The Merchant of Venice*, unsurprisingly exhibits the most candid discomfort with his spiritual and biological parentage and its socially determining aspects. In a scene that eerily looks forward to Edgar and Gloucester's trip toward Dover cliffs, Gobbo hides his identity from his blind parent while addressing him several times as "father." At one point he calls Old Gobbo his

47. Shell 52. Shell also notes that Shylock's late wife Leah bears the name of Jacob's first wife.

"true-begotten father" (2.2.26)—the puzzling address not only denies bastardy, but also reverses biological processes and lets Lancelot take control of his reproductive roots. The use of the Gobbo surname to identify both characters emphasizes and naturalizes the son's origins in the father, but the juxtaposition of the son's Christian first name, "Lancelot," with the father's Old Testament "Iobbe," (Q1, F1, F3), or "Job,"[48] also encapsulates unease about Christianity's Jewish origins. The mythical adulterous Christian Lancelot might be seen as a debased version of the Jewish figure, his sufferings largely self-inflicted and his actions rendering him unworthy of his pilgrimage's reward. *Merchant*'s Lancelot, in opposition to his father's Old Job, is the New Job, both Judaism's continuation and its degradation.[49]

Perhaps because his situation (as "a poor man's son," his father reminds us at 2.2.40) doesn't allow for the accrual of huge debts, Lancelot does not transform his discomfort with his father into creditor-castration fantasies—i. Instead, he goes straight to the source. He first conceals his identity and filial connection to his father, then arrogates to himself a social status ("*Master* Lancelot") beyond his father's (lines 2.2.38-49), then claims that Old Gobbo's son is dead, and finally, admits that he is Lancelot but leaves his parentage in question:

GOBBO. I cannot think you are my son.

48. For other possible significations of the names, see *Merchant*, 2.3.3, 4, n. 6.

49. Lawrence Danson makes a compelling argument for the Gobbos as a revision of the Biblical Isaac and Jacob. See his "Shakespeare and the Misrecognition of Fathers and Sons," ch. 22 in *Paternity and Fatherhood: Myths and Realities*, ed. Lieve Spaas and Trista Selous (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 236-245, 243. Danson also anticipates the point I make later in the chapter about Lancelot's wish to outdo his father socially (243).

LANCELOT. I know not what I shall think of that; but I am Lancelot the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

(2.2.72-4)

Lancelot's syntax is as ambiguous on religious status as it is on paternity. In "I am Lancelot the Jew's man," one could hear or read "the Jew's man" (servant) as a syntactic unit, or one could hear or read "Lancelot the Jew." Despite his anti-Semitism, Lancelot can no more easily deny the genesis of Christianity in Judaism than he can deny his beginnings in Old Gobbo. When he tells Bassanio, "I serve the Jew" (2.2.104) and jokes to his father, "My master's a very Jew" (lines 85-6), he not only speaks of Shylock but also ~~utters a statement with a meaning identical to the joke~~makes a joke similar to the present-day Christian bumper-sticker legend—"My boss is a Jewish carpenter." If Lancelot is a Christian, his spiritual master is a Jew. How to reconcile contempt for Judaism with reverence for Christianity's Jewish founder and knowledge of Christianity's Judaic past? "I am a Jew if I serve the Jew any longer," he says (2.2.91). The play tries to resolve this fear of reversion by turning Jews into Christians instead.

Just before the final stage of the paternal evasion exercise with Old Gobbo, Lancelot declares, "I am Lancelot your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be" (2.2.70-71). And eventually, he admits, "Father, I am glad you are come" (2.2.88) before Old Gobbo accompanies him to his new Christian master. In Lancelot, whose babblings reveal a specific religious tension that *Merchant*'s other Christians partly conceal, the play hits a brief optimistic note on secular ~~f~~ather-child ties. Old

Gobbo's aid in Lancelot's upward mobility, as well as the absence of another creditor on whom Lancelot might displace his discontent, ~~apparently allows for~~ correlates with a more frank exchange.

By the third act, however, Lancelot has decided that to escape the "sins of the father" (3.5.1), a child must have an unchaste mother and not know who the father is. For Lancelot and Gratiano, at least, the fear of castrating cuckoldry, and more specifically, of unwittingly raising another man's children, seems the by-product or perhaps projection of a desire to occlude one's origins in one's father. The symbolic castration of the father is first socially liberating—one can be the author of oneself—but finally results in the typical early-modern drama mode of paranoia when mothers and by extension wives are imagined as by necessity adulterous. That Lancelot's namesake is the Christian Ur-adulterer who cuckolds a fatherly king underscores *Merchant*'s concern with marital betrayal. And when Jessica responds to his "Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter" (3.5.8) with "[t]hat were a kind of bastard hope indeed" (10), he agrees: "when I shun Scylla your father, I fall into Charybdis your mother" (13-14). (Scylla is female in classical myth, and Lancelot here offers yet another denial of Shylock's maleness.) ~~Regardless of~~ Lancelot's misidentification of Scylla's gender, he sees the absence of constraining paternity as the presence of polluted and polluting maternity~~:~~ the possibility of maternal unfaithfulness and ensuing bastardy. *Merchant* ends in a similar vein, with Gratiano quasi-jocularly worrying about Nerissa's fidelity. The resentment of the creditor, absent for Lancelot, is

the necessary substitute for acknowledged resentment of the father and concomitant devaluation of the self. Portia and Bassanio are at their strongest when they channel that resentment into an alternative source of indebtedness and social status, usurer/lender Shylock. The creditor as site for displacement ~~defensive barrier~~ must not be too remote, as for Lancelot, or too close, as for the last figure I discuss.

In one of *Merchant*'s last cheerful-terrible moments, Jessica, exchanging classically influenced insults with Lorenzo under the moon, speaks of Medea, who "In such a night . . . gathered the enchanted herbs / That did renew old Aeson" (5.1.12-4). Lorenzo's response makes the comparison clear: "In such a night / Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew / And with an unthrift love did run from Venice" (lines 14-6). Medea, too, stole from her wealthy father to run away with her culturally Other love, and Jessica's reference to the sorceress's rejuvenation of a father is perhaps an essay by proxy at redeeming her own lack of filial love. The mi~~mi~~ssing pieces of this allusion, though, make Jessica's rhetorical reconstitution of the family unconvincing. Medea goes on to trick her husband's cousins into killing their own father and eventually kills her children in revenge for Jason's infidelity.[50] Jessica's allusion neither recalls a pleasant picture of relationships in the family of origin nor forecasts a harmonious family of adulthood.

50. See *Ovid's* Metamorphoses*: the Arthur Golding Translation*, ed. John Frederick Nims (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 7.360-81. Before restoring Aeson's youth, Medea first cuts his throat and drains his blood, a paradoxical sequence that reverses Portia's demand that Shylock both injure Antonio according to the bond and shed no blood whatsoever (*Merchant* 4.1.321). Mahood (5.1.13-14n), calls 7.159-293 "Shakespeare's favourite passage of the *Metamorphoses*" (he also culls from it in the final act of *The Tempest* for Prospero's abjuration speech), so that it is unlikely that he was unfamiliar with the next two hundred lines, which contain the story of Medea and her children. Nims finds that Shakespeare was familiar with Ovid in Latin but used Golding's translation when he read in English (pp. xx-xxi).

Jessica's castration of a usurer (her decampment with Shylock's stones) is unusual in that the usurer is in fact her father. Unlike the Christians, she cannot render the emasculation impulse less appalling by displacing it onto an extrafamilial figure. The connection between economic, familial, and status conflicts is too clear, in her case, for *Merchant* to conceal an unease with even symbolic unmanning as a means of dealing with social discontents. When Jessica trades Shylock's turquoise ring for a monkey, she simultaneously violates his principle of thrift and rejects an emblem of the connection between her parents. The ring, a type of jewelry eroticized throughout act 5, here indicates a specific concern with reproduction—in the sixteenth century the turquoise was sometimes thought ~~thought~~ to cause sterility in women, and one critic suggests that the discarding of the ring is a fertility rite.[51] A contraceptive gem would prevent Jessica from producing a Christian child. But the act of reading Jessica's rejection of the ring as involving a desire for reproduction, ~~for~~ the physical and temporal extension of the self~~, is problematized by her rejection of it as the negation of a social and reproductive tie that led to her existence.~~ The conundrum underscores the ambiguity with which *Merchant* treats characters' attempts to establish for themselves or~~–~~ improve their social positions, to reinvent themselves by wishing away or reformulating parents. The sentiment in Jessica's act 2 lament—"Alack, what heinous sin is it in me / To be ashamed to be my

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Fiedler also notes that Jessica's speech "reminds us of the darker aspects of Medea's story" but concludes that Portia, not Jessica, is the Medea analogue (117, 115). However, he does see Portia and Jessica as versions of the same figure, the folk-tale "ogre's daughter" (112). Shapiro, too, identifies Jessica with Medea (158).

51. See Jackson Campbell Boswell, "Shylock's Turquoise Ring," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (Autumn 1963): 481-83. Cited in Mahood 112, notes.

father's child" (2.3.15-6) carries on throughout the play. "Alack" is not just "alas," but also "a lack"—her language positions her rejection of Shylock as an absence of self. The denial of origins requires a sort of nonexistence. Jessica and Lorenzo's pet monkey, a parody of a child, is a product of Jessica's offer of the ring just as Jessica is a product of the wooing symbolized in her mother's offer of the ring. The monkey is a paranoid vision of Jessica and Lorenzo's potential children, the malformed offspring of an unsanctioned union.[52] The play moves beyond the legalistic, money-centered urban strictures of Venice not to gentle country merriment in Belmont, but to a wilderness of monkeys.

Jessica's silence and resistance to festivity in Belmont's otherwise holiday atmosphere in act 5 illustrate the failure of her attempted refashioning of herself. Shylock and his distaste for the "vile squealing of thee~~e~~ wry-necked fife" and the "sound of shallow foppery" (2.5.29, 34) are still with his daughter, whose rejection of melody perhaps exaggerates his—her final remark is "I am never merry when I hear sweet music" (5.1.69). Shylock and Jessica's rejection of the music indicates a core realism at odds with Belmont's romantic escapism and with Jessica's own attempt at ~~i~~t. Shakespeare has her make a successful physical escape but not its less tangible and concrete mental equivalent.

Merchant's discontents—Jessica's and Antonio's isolation, Lancelot Gobbo's religious worries and mistrust of women, Shylock's bitterness that shades into

52. Cf. Othello's exclamation on thinking of Desdemona's infidelity: "Goats and monkeys!," *Othello* 4.1.257. Bruce Boehrer also reads Jessica's connection to the monkey as in part a parodic stand-in for several family ties ("Shylock and the Rise of the Household Pet: Thinking Social Exclusion in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50, no. 2 [1999]: 152-170, 158).

beatenness—are highly selective. The play's torn edges surround a center of performance-ready cheer, the smug gold of Portia and Bassanio's new life together in Belmont. *Merchant* has clear winners, and ~~the~~ the play's critiques of the methods its population uses to combat parentally defined places in the social structure do not necessarily extend to ~~substantive~~ critiques of that structure itself. ~~Rather, the play seems to say, some are possessed of luck and skill and others are not.~~ "[S]o is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father" complains Portia ("will," of course, has at least three significances here). "Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?" (1.2.20-2). The syntax suggests that she speaks of fathers rather than the more obvious suitors. Nerissa, diplomatic and/or mercenary as *Merchant* itself, refuses to answer directly.

Before examining in the next chapter Jonson's *The Staple of News*, another play that links the early modern family with early modern commerce, a glance at a play more closely contemporaneous with *Merchant* for a similarly ambiguous family portrait. In *Romeo and Juliet*, Juliet asks a question much like Portia's in its counterbalancing of sexual desire and filial duty, and its inquiry into the extent to which one *is* one's parent: "Wherefore art thou Romeo?"[53] Because he must be, the play ultimately responds. Romeo and Juliet deny their fathers and refuse their names, yet cause each other's deaths as surely as if they had been feuding alongside their Montague and Capulet elders. The monuments the parents plan will commemorate not the children's triumph over paternal

53. William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. Jill L. Levenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2.1.76.

will, but their failure to escape it. The dynamic of a non-dramatic Elizabethan narrative works likewise: Shakespeare's generosity to his father in purchasing the coat of arms revised the structure of inheritance so that the powerful child left a legacy to the indebted father, but it also reinforced the conventional inheritance dynamic. The younger Shakespeare's gentry status could only have gained legitimacy, according to the Renaissance logic of rank, because his father possessed it first. *Merchant*'s triumphs over biological or spiritual fathers are likewise recursive, whether they involve attempts to overtake or merely to take over. In emphasizing this recursivity, so detested in the autoreproductive process of usury, the play levels the distinction between a suspect financial practice and an accepted family practice, throwing early modern disparagement of the one and approbation of the other equally into question.

Chapter 4

Invisible Deed: Paternity and Abstraction in *The Staple of News*

Some insist that Jonson's late city comedy *The Staple of News* (c. 1625, perf. 1626) is not the "dotage" that Dryden so devastatingly labeled it. For them, it is coherent, a "most polite neat thing."[1] The play frequently evokes one of two general responses. The first is a topical one, pushing readers to historicize minutely despite *Staple*'s clear disdain for historical particulars: "although our title, sir, be News, / We yet adventure here to tell you none / But show you common follies" (Prologue for the Court, 9-11). The second is a gestalt impulse, generally frustrated.[2] A smaller number of readers even argue that the

1. Ben Jonson, *The Staple of News*, ed. Anthony Parr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 1.5.73. All references are to this edition unless otherwise specified. The most recent critic to make this valiant effort is Raphael Shargel, in "A Stewed Comedy: Chaos and Authority in *The Staple of News*," *The Ben Jonson Journal* 12 (2005): 45-72. Shargel's attempt at redemption is slightly undercut by a memorable phrase on his first page: many critics, he writes, see the play as a "runt child suffering from multiple personality disorder" (45). Barbara Ann Lukacs also defends *Staple* ("Ben Jonson: A Study of the Four Late Plays," [PhD diss., Drew University, 1986], chap. 2 passim).

John Dryden voices the "dotages" complaint in the person of one Neander in *An Essay Of Dramatic Poesie* [1668]. *The Major Works*, ed. Keith Walker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 70-130, line 111.

2. As for topicality, Sara Pearl, for example, emphasizes *Staple*'s representation of foreign policy; see her "Sounding to Present Occasions: Jonson's Masques of 1620-25" in *The Court Masque*, ed. David Lindley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 60-77, 61. More recently, Paul Yachnin takes up the play's commentary on the news trade, pointing out that when it comes to topicality, Jonson "has it both ways"; his objections to newsmongering are hypocritical in a play that makes so many contemporary allusions (195). See Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), quotation on 195. Alan B. Farmer's "Play-Reading, News-Reading, and Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News*," in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Marta Straznicky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 127-158, examines Jonson's concern about *Staple*'s effects on consumers of religious news. Jonson's inability to live up to his own anti-topical precepts, presumably, justify topical readings of the play.

The unifying impulse is exemplified by, along with Shargel, Arthur Bivins Stonex, "The Sources of Jonson's *The Staple of News*," *PMLA* 30, no. 4 (1915): 821-830; Stonex sees the morality tradition as providing ample unity.

play is funny. These attempts at aesthetic rehabilitation are unconvincing. *The Staple of News* is only intermittently amusing. The characters who are good are not likable. The action meanders. Both Jonson and Shakespeare, as they themselves pass middle age, occasionally adopt a skeletal approach to drama, a rejection of beauty. They pare away layers of characterization and verbal ornament to write austere plays more schematic than those of their early and middle careers (this is somewhat less true of Shakespeare, but *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and *Timon of Athens* are prime examples).

But *The Staple of News* is significant as a piece of intellectual history: it marks Jonson's return to the stage after a decade of court masques, mirrors Shakespeare's late romances in its tendency to render characters as abstractions rather than psychologically realistic figures, and executes a variation on a theme underpinning a surprising number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century plays, paternal usury.[3] For its part, the gestalt response expresses a Jonsonian desire as well as a New Critical one. One of *Staple*'s projects, as I will argue below, is to create a chronological whole.

L. C. Knights described the play as "that odd combination of morality play and topical revue."[4] But what may seem jumbled and aesthetically regressive is also, more respectably, a reunion of past with present, seventeenth-century topicality and prior centuries' aesthetics. The audience experiences not the verbally and emotionally lush Renaissance that the nineteenth century could recognize as a more brutal precursor to its

3. For an overview of the usurer figure in forty-five plays written from 1553 to 1643, see Arthur Bivins Stonex, "The Usurer in Elizabethan Drama," *PMLA* 31, no. 2 (1916): 190-210. The usurer is sometimes an actual father; in the seventeenth century, he is increasingly likely to be an uncle.

4. Knights, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937), 220.

own literary ethos, but the less common version that in its self-punishing poetics both anticipates twentieth-century modernism and recalls artistic traditions closer to monasticism. *Staple* lays bare the confluence of family, finance, and law given the occasional glossy varnish in *Merchant*. Comedy though it is, Jonson's play is the skull beneath *Merchant*'s skin, largely dispensing with psychological and verbal refinement. The play does not usually make for enjoyable reading—starkness makes for a difficult affective sell—nor need it. *Staple* is abstract because it is in part about the abstraction of the familial and social systems it concerns.

Jonson's premodern strain does emerge earlier in his career. In *Every Man in His Humour*, so dominated are the humors characters by predictable and seemingly ineradicable quirks that one can hardly imagine their being changed by others; their fixed natures suggest the irrelevance of influence even while the play absorbs itself with imitation and emulation. *Every Man In* recalls earlier morality plays in its representation of mono-faceted characters, and *Staple* emphasizes late medieval and early Tudor aesthetics in its return to allegory.[5] The persistence of artistic form parallels the play's emphasis on a different sort of chronological continuity, that from father to son. Jonson applies the soothing temporal link of the father-son relationship to the various discontinuities in the play, discarding some and salvaging others.[6]

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5. See Charles Read Baskervill, "English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1911), on the influence of English morality plays on *Staple* and the humour plays (29, 26-27). Baskervill also mentions the importance of Aristophanes to *Staple*'s allegory (29), but in either case the point about chronological continuity still applies.

6. Douglas M. Lanier, in "The Prison-House of the Canon: Allegorical Form and Posterity in Ben Jonson's *The Staple of Newes*" (*Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 2 [1985]: 253-267) calls

Staple opens with son Pennyboy Junior eagerly awaiting the striking of a watch that will proclaim his twenty-first birthday and his access to his dead father's wealth. Even here, though, the play's attitude to the passage of time is ambivalent:

> 'T strikes! One, two,
> Three, four, five, six. Enough, enough, dear watch,
> Thy pulse hath beat enough. Now sleep and rest;
> Would thou couldst make the time to do so too.
> I'll wind thee up no more.
>
> (1.1.10-14)

Junior's specific objection to the watch's continued striking is unclear; perhaps his desire for its silence merely indicates his happiness with the precise moment of attaining his majority. In general, though, the play is uncomfortable with novelty and mutability in many forms, from news itself to the accrual of interest on a principle. At any rate, the death of Junior's father, Frank Pennyboy, is only pretended (the conjunction of a timepiece striking in the first scene and an undead father shows *Hamlet*'s vast reach), and Junior's possession of a "watch" rather than a clock augurs the play's engagement with spectatorship, which will become apparent later in this chapter.[7] Soon Pennyboy Senior, a usurer and Junior's paternal uncle, rivals Junior for the fortune. Junior, meanwhile,

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allegory "a deliberately universalized form, a timeless mode" (257). Allegory may or may not be universal, but Lanier's essay anticipates my characterization of the allegorical mode as Jonson's attempt at a defense against the passage of time.

7. *Hamlet* 1.1, even more concerned with spectatorship than *Staple*, also has a first-scene "watch," both the activity and the word. See William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, et al. (New York: Norton, 1997), 1.1.14, 1.1.173.

invests in the Staple, a company vending news of dubious authenticity. Father, in disguise and renamed "Canter," accompanies son, who lays waste his powers by spending if not getting, buying the most foppish clothes available ("sits my ruff well?") and courting a highly allegorical Lady Pecunia, who resides with Senior (1.3.13).

Having engaged in the adolescent fantasy of watching people's responses to his end—though for the humdrum middle-aged purpose of seeing how much he is needed, not how much he is loved—Pennyboy Canter grows increasingly annoyed with his ineptly Oedipal son. He reveals his identity in a *pater ex machina* scene and takes back the borrowed Pecunia, who has really been his all along. Pennyboy Junior repents, or at least regrets ("Where is my fashioner, my featherman?" [5.1.16]). Pennyboy Senior goes mad at the prospect of not being able to cheat the heir of his inheritance, putting his innocent dogs on trial for alienating Pecunia, and father and son team up to defeat Picklock, a lawyer who attempts to convert the inheritance into his own legal fees. Saving dozens of customers from their own worst reading impulses, the newspaper folds, The family is purified of evil influences.

The "dream factory" of 1610's *The Alchemist*, as Anthony Parr writes in his introduction to *The Staple of News*, informs the Staple office, where "rumour is turned into gold."[8] 1609's *Epicoene*, like *Staple* in its grasping, nephew-cheating uncle and transgender bait, also eschews naturalism. Jonson's preoccupation with authenticity only grows more pervasive fifteen years after producing two of his most influential plays and

8. See Anthony Parr, introduction to *The Staple of News*, cited in note 1 above, 13.

nine years after his *Workes*. *Staple* is perhaps the most masque-like of Jonson's dramas in its reliance on allegorical figures such as Pecunia and its heavily ironized, artificial atmosphere, but more than just masque conventions influence the play's disdain for realism in plotting and characterization—forms of the unreal are its subject matter. Like alchemy, and like *Epicoene*'s false-pretenses engagement, *Staple*'s news office and usury share the fantasy and abomination of creation out of nothing.[9] They are reproductive ruptures; for Jonson their products lack meaning because they lack clear antecedents. Similarly, both the news office and *Staple*'s brand of law participate in a troubled juxtaposition of socially significant representation—usually verbal—and a lack of prior legitimation. The newspaper's reports are both infinitely desirable and infinitely fictional. The law's documents are at once all-powerful and subject to quick revision. And while usury's illegitimate multiplication is problematic, in their constant novelty both reportage and legal text are even more so. They emerge from a void. Their medium, language, must be redeemed. *Staple* engineers that redemption through father and son.

Like the threat of usury, the disreputable Staple evaporates, only to be replaced by the danger of Picklock's legal machinations. The complicated plot can seem a welter of unrelated distractions. But discontents with paternity and filiation ultimately subsume Jonson's other critiques; *Staple*'s concern with father and son precedes its quarrels with

9. Alexander Leggatt, in *Ben Jonson: His Vision and His Art* (London: Methuen, 1981), writes that Jonson was throughout his career "both repelled and attracted by the idea of false creation" (23), a generalization supported by *The Staple of News*. However, my argument works against Leggatt's view of Jonson's representation of abstraction: "[w]hile Jonson's art seems to move at times toward morality-play abstraction, he is never finally content with such abstraction; there is an awareness of the solidity and complexity of life" (xv). *Staple* is an exception, I will argue; "never" is too strong a word.

journalism and outlasts its anxieties about law. From the moment Pennyboy Junior hears the false report of his father's death, it is in fatherhood that the play's fragility of connection between something and nothing, and especially between verbal representation and other forms of lived reality, is most significant. Usury, journalism, and law aren't the play's only productions out of nothing; in his ambiguous connection to his father, Pennyboy Junior appears one too. Unlike usurious interest or shoddy journalism or easily manipulated legal deeds, with their unfailing novelty and absent sources of authentication, Pennyboy Junior's origins should be clear—they lie in Frank Pennyboy. But son and father are disconnected from each other in various ways. The play itself initially does little to suggest a meaningful physical or social link between progeny and progenitor. The ease with which all initially believe Canter's implicit claim *not* to be Junior's father undercuts the ease with which they eventually credit his claim to *be* Junior's father. Neither claim has any evidence supporting it beyond mere verbal assurance, and Frank Pennyboy's successful masquerade as Canter underscores the deceptive nature of the linguistic. Father and son are so unalike, so thoroughly estranged, that those familial labels seem irrelevant.

Yet although Jonson declines to resuscitate usury or the Staple, and though his characterization of the law remains disillusioned, he reunites son and father. The forced quality of that reunion testifies both to its strains and its necessity. The paternal-filial pair, rather than a judge as is the case in *Every Man in His Humour* and *Volpone*, must certify the law. Ultimately, it validates the dominion of the word, which includes the play itself,

just as the play's plot supports the ideal of the father-child bond. That familial tie emerges as the prime symbol of cultural authenticity and continuity. And for Jonson continuity—legible communal tradition, rather than mere concreteness, specificity, emotion, or even the individual—is the site of real meaning. It may seem illogical that a personal tie should represent this abstract succession, but Jonsonian fatherhood, though not *im*personal, is what one might call *tran*spersonal. (This representation of fatherhood is perhaps unsurprising in a posthumous son.) Its metaphorical resonance crosses the boundaries imposed by a more physically and technically defined paternity.

Staple picks up where *Merchant* leaves off. The binaries that the Elizabethan play creates only to dismantle are absent from its Caroline counterpart: no city/country agon, no Christian/Jew polarity. The father and the usurer have moved closer together, biologically and socially. Both are living even if one feigns death, and they are siblings. Financially, too, the play seems a continuation of *Merchant*: Shylock's fiscal penalty at the end of the trial scene changes a creditor into a debtor, and at *Staple*'s opening, Pennyboy Senior owes rather than is owed. But Pecunia's righteous decampment from Senior to Junior is only a warmup for a later transfer of wealth, Pennyboy Canter's recovery of money from his son. At the play's end, then, father and child are in fiscal and social debt to each other: Junior owes his father because of his own fiscal irresponsibility, and Canter owes his son partly for Junior's resourcefulness in outwitting Picklock, but mostly because of the inheritance conventions Canter appears willing to follow. In *Staple*, each party is a creditor. In this respect Jonson's play is more balanced than

Shakespeare's, less concentrated on the narratives of the younger generation. So Pennyboy Senior's profession, familiar to playgoers from a long history of Elizabethan and Jacobean stage moneylending, serves not as a mere figure for unwelcome filial obligation but as a bridge to other industries and what they suggest about father-child ties. As is typical of city comedies, *Staple* is more accepting and frank than *Merchant* about the economic dependence figured in both usury and inheritance. It takes its cue from the matter-of-fact Gobbos rather than from *Merchant*'s upper ranks and their hallmark avoidance of gaucherie at any cost. As Canter says of Pecunia's relationship to family, "She the fortunate / Can want no kindred, we the poor know none" (4.2.131-32). And *Staple*'s comic centerpiece is the petit-bourgeois fiscal prudence of 3.4, including Pennyboy Senior's taunts of the promoters, collective grasshoppers to his ant, who cannot convince him to invest in the Staple.

CYMBAL. You are a rogue!

PENNYBOY SENIOR. I think I am, sir, truly.

CYMBAL. A rascal and a money-bawd!

PENNYBOY SENIOR. My surnames.

CYMBAL. A wretched rascal!

PENNYBOY SENIOR. You will overflow,

And spill all.

(3.4.81-84)

Decades after *Merchant*, Jonson revenges Antonio's insults of Shylock. Again, then, rather than a simple fear of financial subjection, the more nebulous worry that is problematic reproduction is what puts the usurer in the play alongside the uncontrolled dissemination of news items and the proliferation of legal deeds. The news may not be true, and the legal deeds may not be related to the "law of nature," as the poet Madrigal puts it (4.1.19); the dubious social legitimacy and the unremitting novelty of that work is what usury shares with it.

The benevolently and malevolently oppressive fathers of *Merchant*, Portia's and Jessica's, are here transmuted into a benevolently oppressive father and a greedy moneylending uncle, with the uncle revising Shylock's part. (Like Shylock, Pennyboy Senior is frequently "usurer" and "dog" or "cur."[10] And the accusation that he "caulks his windows, spars up all his doors" [2.4.169] harkens back to Shylock's closed house—"Lock up my doors . . . . stop my house's ears, I mean my casements"—even more than it does to *Epicoene*'s acoustophobic Morose.)[11] That the usurer-uncle plays father figure to Pennyboy Junior's son figure is made clear in their names. But although Pennyboy Senior is briefly *Staple*'s most viable comic character—his battles with Almanac, Cymbal, and Fitton in act 3 are far more amusing than anything else in the play—one could forgive a reader or audience member for forgetting about Pennyboy Senior before he even has a chance to repent. His connection to Pennyboy Junior is primarily schematic. Usurer-

10. "Usurer" in the *dramatis personae*, at the third intermean, l.4, and at 5.5.8; "dog" at 2.4.90, 4.3.76, and 5.2.16; "cur" at 2.4.90 and 4.3.75.

11. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. M. M. Mahood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2.5.28, 32.

father Shylock's creation of a bond of flesh rather than money accentuates the centrality of blood ties in *Merchant*, and the difficulty of severing strong connections. In contrast, *Staple*'s ties are too weak; the language of enclosure I quote above indicates desperation rather than success. Jonson's usurer has little hold on flesh, money, or heir.

Barely sidestepping the patriarchal role, Senior's position evokes both fatherhood's centrality and its dependence on the most fragile of threads. The bodily link between father and child is demonstrated by the symbolic—language—and necessarily mediated by a woman. *Merchant* generally wants to make the symbolic more concrete, representing the metaphor of usury as unnatural reproduction almost literally. But *Staple* oscillates between two desires, the reification of the symbol and the rehabilitation of its status *as* symbol. The play realizes the abstraction that is *pecunia* in Pecunia, the paradoxically insubstantial embodiment of the credit industry as well as the embodiment of the economic ties between father and son. And Pecunia's femaleness signifies more than a bow to the gender of the Latin noun. It also doubles the female link between fathers and sons—the mother. Pecunia's power is characterized as "milk" more than once (5.1.123, 5.2.81). Her baroquely imagined pedigree, which arrives at 4.4 to induce Junior's envy ("I will have such a scroll / Whate'er it cost me" [29-30]), further ties her to the subject of maternity. As for Pecunia's wealth, "she comes that way by her mother. / But by her grandmother she's Duchess of Mines" (2.2.13-14). But the character's manifestly emblematic nature, no less than the improbably exact lineage drawn by apprentice herald Piedmantle "[f]rom man's creation" (15), is a reminder of the

theoretical nature of the child's link to the father, its dependence on the word. Just as in *Merchant*, the imagined mother in *Staple* is "Charybdis" (4.2.44); the reference revives the suspicion of female infidelity made explicit by Lancelot Gobbo.[12]

Usury and paternity, in that regard, are a logical pair. Pennyboy Senior also functions in the realm of the conceptual and probable rather than the concrete. Unlike Shylock, Senior is rarely represented as possessing ducats (or pounds) or jewels; his wealth instead comprises more remote financial signifiers—bonds, statutes, law. Acknowledging a reduction in interest rates, he tells Pecunia, "your grace be fall'n off two i'the hundred" (2.1.4); the phrasing is so abstract as to lack a clear grammatical object. Later he laments that "[w]hen monies went at ten i'the hundred, I, . . . / . . . Could spare the poor two out of ten" (2.3.41, 43). The loans are not even valued consistently; something already nebulous becomes even less concrete. The ambiguity indicates the reproductive abstraction that paternity and usury share: a disconnect from visible human labor and ordinary materiality. *Staple* suggests that the tie between father and son is based on the abstract in itself. In this sense, fatherhood appears unnatural reproduction. But *Staple*'s abstraction, like the father-son tie, transcends the destructive vagaries of history. Abstractions cannot be pinned down to the material world and its mutability, that trait abhorred by Jonson even more than by other Renaissance authors. The play ultimately sides with the timeless emblematic over the vanishing empirical.

12. For "Charybdis," see *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Mahood, cited in n. 11, 3.5.14. Also see chap. 3, 119.

Staple also troubles the idea of legitimate production in its version of journalism, an industry much closer to home for Jonson than usury. The king of Spain is made Pope, the Staple's sources write (3.2.21), but even more threatening is the certitude that "in Galileo's study" is a "burning glass . . . / . . . To fire any fleet that's out at sea" (53-54). And the terror builds: an engineer "[h]ath made the Hollanders an invisible eel / To swim the haven at Dunkirk and sink all / The shipping there" (60-62). The reports involve entirely fictional creations—an ersatz Pope, fanciful weaponry, a penetrating eel to match Charybdis—and the reports themselves are of mysterious origin. In each case, and in other instances as well, the news brief is prefaced by a nebulous "[t]hey write" (21, 53, 59, 75, 97). Who "they" are remains unclear. The products reported and sold by the news office, then, are fictional in the first case and illegitimate in the second. Even the form of creation Pennyboy Junior describes to Pecunia, his rewarding his former hairdresser Tom by buying him a place at the Staple, is overstated: "My creature, princess, / This is my creature. . . . / He was my barber, now he writes *Clericus*!" (3.2.5-7). The repetition implies a certain stagnation in the process of "creation." And the patent unreliability of the Staple's verbiage, not to mention the evaporation of Tom's position when the company collapses, undermines the idea of writing as an act that establishes identity ("writes *Clericus*"). The scenes in the Staple office destabilize the value of creation and representation; Pennyboy's enthusiasms undercut the worth of reproduction itself. *Staple*, like *Every Man in His Humour*, figures doubling negatively. Junior's repetitions are consistently fatuous. At 216-220, his desire for publicity makes him double an

unnecessary donation to the Office, proclaiming, "My princess is a princess! / And put that too under the Office seal" (220-221). The tautology in his boast mirrors the meaninglessness of the fiscal and journalistic reproductions.

The Staple is orderly in its processing of news, as publisher Cymbal and his companion Fitton indicate:

> CYMBAL. And here I have my several rolls and files
> Of news by the alphabet, and all put up
> Under their heads.
> PENNYBOY JUNIOR. But those too, subdivided?
> CYMBAL. Into authentical, and apocryphal;
> FITTON. Or news of doubtful credit, as barbers' news—
> CYMBAL. And tailors' news, porters' and watermen's news.
>
> (1.5.5-10)

But despite the sorting, and the concern with "doubtful credit" (the phrase links the Staple's business to Pennyboy Senior's), none of the news appears to be rejected, either by vendor or customer. The countrywoman who visits the office when Pennyboy Junior sees it for the first time requests a "groatsworth of any news—I care not what" (1.4.11). Its truth value is irrelevant. It comes from "[l]iegers, that lie out / Through all the shires o'th kingdom" (1.5.20-21), and the visual play on "liegers" (agents) and "lie" becomes steadily more apparent as the day-to-day workings of the Staple are revealed. Cymbal and Fitton object to the printing of false news, preferring instead that it be written, because, as

Cymbal says, “While ’tis but written—” and Fitton continues “Though it be ne’er so false, it runs news still” (1.5.49-50). But Jonson mocks printed news, too. In one of three references to the London printer and bookseller Nathaniel Butter (see also 1.4.13 and 1.5.23), the products of the printing press are equally suspect:

> CYMBAL. Nor shall the stationer cheat upon the time
>
> By buttering over again—
>
> FITTON. Once in seven years,
>
> As the age dotes—
>
> CYMBAL. And grows forgetful o’them,
>
> His antiquated pamphlets, with new dates.
>
> But all shall come from the mint—
>
> FITTON. Fresh and new stamped—
>
> (1.5.58-62)

The teasing delay in getting to the object of the sentence, “pamphlets,” mocks the hunger for information the countrywoman exhibits at 1.4.11. Equally notable, though, is the equation of printed news with coin at 61-62. For Jonson, money gained through lending blends into news, and what they have in common is the son-like uncertainty of their origins. The valuable symbols (Cymbals?) are utterly disconnected from what is verifiable. The mixed metaphors in the passage I quote above—news is food at line 59 and money three lines later—heighten the impression of abstraction.

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio asks a rhetorical question about the credit business: "for when did friendship take / A breed for barren metal of his friend?"[13] Jonson echoes Antonio's plaint about commercialization, though *The Staple of News* has a smaller grievance against selling money than it does against selling news. As Parr writes, the play implies a "fundamental absurdity" about the vending of knowledge.[14] Neither Parr nor *Staple* is explicit about what makes the transaction objectionable, but in each case, the product that makes the money is relatively intangible, the process of profit ambiguous. And in each case, the trope is ultimately reproductive. The mixed metaphors of 1.5 giving way to a parturition narrative. The monstrously breeding "barren metal" of usury becomes the difficult birth of the Staple. Pennyboy Junior remarks that the news operation is as successful as though "Wit had married Order" (1.5.69); Cymbal and Fitton readily pick up the familial trope:

FITTON. It has
Cost sweat and freezing.
CYMBAL. And some broken sleeps
Before it came to this.
FITTON. But now it has the shape—
CYMBAL. And is come forth.
PENNYBOY JUNIOR. A most polite neat thing! With all the limbs
As sense can taste!

13. *Merchant*, ed. Mahood, 1.3.125-26.
14. Anthony Parr, introduction, 25.

CYMBAL. It is, sir, though I say it,
As well-begotten a business and as fairly
Helped to the world.

PENNYBOY JUNIOR. You must be a midwife, sir!
Or else the son of a midwife (pray you pardon me!)—
Have helped it forth so happily. What news ha' you?

(70-79)

The marriage of wit and order is a promising start, and the faintly Petrarchan "sweat and freezing" (71) is comfortably in the past. But "[w]ith all the limbs / As sense can taste" (74-75) offers unappetizing possibilities—Junior's counterpoised image of a child missing a piece (the more usual notion of counting a baby's fingers and toes at birth is a bit less dark), along with a hint of cannibalism. The idea of a newly viable dependent echoes in the name of one of the news office's most recent articles, "The Heir," or Pennyboy Junior himself (1.5.83). Junior's identification of Cymbal as a "son of a midwife" (78) in founding the Staple is also telling: every industry in *Staple* is reproductively imagined. And like the metaphorical offspring that is the Staple, heir Junior is at risk. His inheritance is as insubstantial as the news company that hopes to gain from it.

Recent scholarship would lead one to think that the play's fusion of tensions over reproduction and publication emerges from the growth of print culture. As Douglas Brooks concludes, "procreative metaphors were . . . spectacularly suitable for articulating

a range of emergent relations within a book trade radically transformed by the invention of movable type." The converse, Brooks and others find, is also true: after Gutenberg, the language of the book market often described human reproduction, paternity, and filiation.[15] But Jonson's main concern with the publication industry is writing, not printing. His "[c]onceive" at line 23 below hints that the interplay of reproductive and literary metaphors need not rely on movable type:[16]

> . . . all that dabble in the ink
> And defile quills are not those few can think,
> Conceive, express, and steer the souls of men,
> As with a rudder, round thus, with their pen.
>
> (Prologue for the Stage, 21-24)

For Jonson language, rather than more recent inventions, evokes the reproductive. As he writes in *Timber*, language "is the Image of the Parent of it, the Mind."[17] Still, the rise of print does make textual change an increased possibility, hence a greater threat, for media, law, or anything affected by either one. Although writing is frequently imagined as recording ideas, facts, and desires for eternity, multiple documents also involve a troubling *absence* of fixity, as evidenced by Jonson's and Shakespeare's complex

15. Douglas A. Brooks, ed., Introduction, *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 2.

16. The most compelling recent treatment of procreative metaphors for early modern authorship is Katharine Eisaman Maus's "A Womb of His Own: Male Renaissance Poets in the Female Body," reprinted in Brooks 89-108.

17. See *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925-1952), 8, ll. 2031-2033.

publication histories.[18] With print comes more news and in general more newness, the play's textual bête noire.

More than with usury and as much as with journalism, *Staple* concerns itself with law. As is the case in *Merchant*, various legal devices mediate parent-child links. A father's will sparks much of the plot, and a trial scene late in the play lets a legatee witness an inadequately paternal lender's humiliation. In *Merchant*, the will, the bond, and the letter that introduces Portia as a judge are problematic at best, with the first two raising objections from various parties and the third patently false. But on the whole the play makes little fuss over these difficulties. In contrast, Pennyboy Senior's putting his pet dogs Block and Lollard on trial for the imaginary crime of alienating Pecunia functions, even more than in the parallel trial in *Lear* 3.6, as a display of both his madness and the artificiality of courtroom conventions.[19] Fitton's attempt at an animal rescue fails, since as Senior puts it, the dogs are "not bailable. / They stand committed without bail or mainprise" (5.5.4-5). "Where did you lift your leg up last?" Senior demands of Lollard (5.4.69). The dog does not reply. *Merchant*'s trial mocks Shylock's legalism but lets the outcome please most of the characters in the play. *Staple* manages to put law itself on trial.

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18. Julie Sanders has made this point in "Print, Popular Culture, Commodification and Consumption in *The Staple of News*," in *Refashioning Ben Jonson: Gender, Politics, and the Jonsonian Canon*, ed. Julie Sanders, Kate Chedgzoy, and Susan Wiseman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 183-207, 198-99.

19. Cf. Lanier, "The Prison-House of the Canon," 262, and Jonas A. Barish, "Feasting and Judging in Jonsonian Comedy," *Renaissance Drama*, n. s., 5 (1972): 3-35, 32. A dog trial also appears in Aristophanes' *Wasps*, as Tim Moore points out (personal communication, August 14, 2009). That play's father, too, is strangely disembodied, at one point disguised as smoke.

The dog prosecution immediately follows the heavily legalized reconciliation of Junior and Canter, discussed further below. The juxtaposition of the two scenes suggests that what validates the law is not a general sense of right and wrong, but the purpose of generational continuity. Law is of no use to the anti-father/usurer even when he is judge, as he is in *Staple*, rather than accused, as in *Merchant*. Just as Pennyboy Senior's loss of Pecunia in 4.3 puts most of the play's economic activity squarely back into the hands of father and son, Canter's warning Senior of "[i]ntolerable fines, and mulcts imposed" and "forfeitures / Of whole estates" (5.6.38-40) returns law to paternal control. Even Senior frets at his own violation of jurisdiction, his failed "praemunire" (43-44). As for Picklock, the play's official representative of law, Canter reassures Senior that he has Picklock "safe enough in a wooden collar" (50). Though presumably referring to stocks, the wording also makes the lawyer into the very animal Senior puts on trial. But the play's treatment of Picklock is a rejection of certain versions of the law, not of law itself. Jonson's parodic rendition of *Merchant*'s trial scene underscores a problem of legal authenticity that the earlier play addresses more uneasily: whom does the law serve? Portia's courtroom speech on mercy, hypocritical or not, pays tribute to an abstract ethical code, theoretically devoid of preference for any save those in need of mercy. *Staple* dispenses with the illusion that abstraction equals a broadly conceived justice. Justice is irrelevant, since the play's version of law ultimately serves mutual paternal and filial interests.

The common law in particular, with its ideal of ethics stable over time, should provide a counterweight to the incessant novelty so threatening in *Staple*'s representation of journalism. Even with the play's intermittent mockery of law, the trial joins the element of moneylending in the play to enable chronological stability in the form of generational succession (literary as well as biological, since the play evokes writers as recent as Shakespeare and as distant as Aristophanes). And in the process of calling *Merchant* in particular into the present, it revives some of that play's dormant religious tension as well, doubly encapsulating the desire for continuity. The subject of moneylending lets *Merchant* combine its domestic plots with consideration of sectarian strife, but as is the case in other post-Elizabethan city comedies, *Staple*'s usurer first seems religiously insignificant. Both Thomas Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608) and Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (c. 1625), for example, feature usurers whose creed goes unnoted. Frank Felsenstein writes that the stage Jew "all but disappeared" during the Restoration.[20] But there are exceptions: George Granville's *The Jew of Venice* (1701), for one, is an explicit rewrite of *Merchant*. And Elizabethan drama sometimes exercises antisemitism on possible non-Jews too. William Houghton's *Englishmen for My Money* (1598) features one Pisaro, a Portuguese usurer who is never identified as a Jew by himself or anyone else but is called "Judas" and "Signor bottle-nose" nonetheless.[21] At any rate, *Staple* appears to have excised *Merchant*'s Jews. As

20. Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 48.

21. William Houghton, *Englishmen for My Money* (Oxford: The Malone Society Reprints, 1912), l. 1424.

Portia requests of Shylock, it removes the flesh without a trace of blood. But in subjecting to trial the dogs that already recall both Pennyboy Senior and Shylock, *Staple* reawakens a faint memory of both its own dramatic precursor, *Merchant*, and Christianity's religious one, Judaism.[22] Likewise, Senior's "I am a just man. I love still to be just" (2.3.10) echoes Portia's emphasis on the "just pound" of flesh, along with the ambiguity of Shylock's "Antonio is a good man."[23] Just as Shylock means that Antonio has financial resources, not that he is benevolent, Pennyboy Senior speaks not of fairness but of exactitude. A more striking verbal echo is Senior's claim for justice: "I am for justice. When did I leave justice?" (2.3.45). Though Shylock only utters the word once in *Merchant*, others put the term in his mouth repeatedly, and mock him with it.[24] "Justice" suggests the values of the Hebrew rather than the Greek Bible in both cases. And Jonson's revision of the prodigal son story to feature paternal reservations at the son's return, rather than joyous celebration, also evokes a pre-Christian religious paradigm, rejecting the total forgiveness that is the most distinctively Christian aspect of the parable.[25] Pennyboy Canter's most enthusiastic response to Junior's attempt to safeguard the family capital is grudging: "[t]his act of piety and good affection / Hath partly reconciled me to you" (5.3.23-24). In short, the play has absorbed *Merchant* and *Merchant*'s drive to erase Judaism, but not without a trace of indigestion. *Staple*'s

22. See n. 10 above.

23. *Merchant*, ed. Mahood, 1.3.11, 4.1.323.

24. See *Merchant*, ed. Mahood. Shylock demands "justice" at 3.3.8; Solanio derides this desire at 2.8.17 and 21; Salerio at 3.2.278 and 281; Portia at 4.1.194, 199, 311, 312, 317, and 335.

25. Cf. those Richard Helgerson describes in *Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

distaste for novelty is such that religious precedent, like legal precedent, cannot be entirely dismissed.

The play's subtle recall of the religious forebear parallels its more obvious and stronger attachment to the father. Paternal absence is a clear desideratum in *Merchant*. But Pennyboy Canter, like *Every Man In*'s Kno'well, does not retreat with the thoroughness of Portia's father. Temporary invisibility only makes his uses more clear, just as it does for Shakespeare's Henry V and Duke Vincentio. Jonson's use of the disguised-observer device for a father rather than a political ruler emphasizes paternal power. In *Staple*, and not in *Merchant*, the child and the social order rely on the older generation's stamp of approval. But fatherly approval aside, in *Staple* Jonson eschews his earlier expression of the law in a particular person, *Every Man In*'s Justice Clement. (*Merchant*'s legality is similarly dependent on individuals, Shylock and Portia.) Like other late Jonson plays, the most obvious example of which is *Bartholomew Fair* and its warrant, *Staple* represents law as a matter of texts: statutes, wills, contracts; in general, papers both economic and changeable. *Merchant*'s will, bond, and letter of introduction are important, of course, but the precise contents of those documents—the will's and the bond's terms, "Bellario's" qualifications—matter more in the play than the existence of the documents per se. What the comparison indicates is that both in themselves and in connection to paternity, the ideas of the word and the abstract are far more important for Jonson than for Shakespeare. For Jonson, especially, verbal representation is intricately interwoven with parent-child ties. The linguistic productions of the Staple require

reproductive metaphor. Conversely, the play binds father and son together by legal language.[26] And the word, like the presence of the father, becomes more powerful in the play's transition from the news office to the legal world but even more troublingly unreliable.

In theory the common law's principles are general and abstract enough to transcend minute temporal variations in morality. Before the dog-trial, and before Picklock's advantageous legal position makes clear the necessity for an alliance between father and son, Pennyboy Canter has utmost confidence in the judiciary: "I will not change a syllab with thee [Picklock] more, / Till I may meet thee at a bar in court, / Before thy judges" (5.2.37-39). But *Staple*'s legal ideal is threatened not just by the trial but even more by a temporary overdose of textual change. The father-son tie, a more traditional source of social continuity than the legal profession, must eventually ground it. In the dedication to *Every Man out of His Humour* (perf. 1599), Jonson had called the Inns of Court "the noblest nurseries of humanity and liberty in the kingdom"; in *Staple* that child-care metaphor appears in a more significant light. Jonson's emphasis on the paternal trust fuses legal and familial stability and links them to the verbal symbol. Perhaps not coincidentally, trusts developed in England under the common law at the end of the medieval period, at the same time as the morality play whose allegorical mode

26. Luke Wilson, in "Ben Jonson and the Law of Contract " (*Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 5, no. 2 [Autumn 1993]: 281-306), reads Jonsonian drama, in this instance *The Alchemist*, as representing "a mode of conforming human experience to conceptual (specifically legal) categories" (296); he also remarks that Jonson has an "obsession with futurity" and is "concerned with the maintenance of a sort of temporal equilibrium" (295, 298). Wilson's discussion of the legal action of assumpsit departs from the focus of this chapter, but his emphasis on the interplay of Jonson's temporal and legalistic concerns precedes my argument's.

Staple depends on.[27] Both depend on representation and substitution. In other words, on linguistically mediated abstractions of individuals, a trait that links them to the play's highly abstracted form of paternity itself. "Your trust's another self," cook Lickfinger remarks (5.3.7). The border between the human and its legal, verbal representation is slippery. The representation, as it turns out, is slippery too.

In the second and third acts, devout supply-sider Pennyboy Senior argues that the laws governing usury are self-defeating (2.3.32-43, 3.4.33-34). His status as the play's semiofficial greedy miser would call his protests into question were it not for their logic. But the *changing* of the law disturbs Senior, too; he's the play's spokesman for the importance of legal precedent, approving his own repentance "by Magna Carta" (5.6.44). The subject of legality is in abeyance during the scenes at the Staple office but returns in a more explicitly textual form in act 5, when Picklock attempts to capture the Pennyboy inheritance, pretending to ally himself now with the father, now with the son. A "deed" formalizing the "trust" that Pennyboy Canter has created for his son is the chief legal document concerning the pair. The two words echo wistfully in the play—seven times for "deed" in the legal sense, nineteen for "trust"—as though a financial trust were a materialized emotion, a paper deed an action.[28] "[T]rust you unto my trust," Picklock

27. At the end of the nineteenth century, the legal historian Frederic Maitland, whose breadth of knowledge of English law was perhaps unequalled in his time, wrote, "If we were asked what was the greatest and most distinctive achievement performed by Englishmen in the field of jurisprudence I cannot think that we could have any better answer to give than this, namely, the development from century to century of the trust idea." Maitland was to voice this sentiment throughout his career. (Frederic W. Maitland, "The Unincorporate Body," in *Selected Essays*, ed. H. D. Hazeltine, G. Lapsley, and P. H. Winfield [1936; Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1968], 129).

28. Lanier finds twenty, a disparity I have not yet been able to reconcile, plus "trussed" (5.3.15), 266, note 21.

urges Pennyboy Junior. "'Tis that that shall secure you, an absolute deed" (5.1.108-09). And as Picklock points out, a deed is essentially a speech act, or more precisely, a writing act: "Is't not / A perfect act, and absolute in law" (5.2.7-8). Picklock uses "perfect" in its more Latinate sense; for him the act is finished, with all potential for mutability stopped. A trust, even more than an ordinary will, is an effort to continue realizing desires after the original trustor can no longer see them through in person. Replacing people with words—abstracting them—seems an ideal here. But this particular deed appears in no way as reliable as an observable human action. Its effects cannot be trusted at all. Immediately after the revelation of Pennyboy Canter's identity and the Staple's collapse (4.4.117, 5.1.41), Picklock denies the trust's existence, pretending the money has been deeded to him alone (5.1.55, 5.2). Invisible, the trust seems on the verge of evaporating alongside the Staple, its abstraction both desideratum and disadvantage.[29]

Although the law does not initially display much connection to a stable reality or to generational unity, the lawyer himself hardly denies the father-son bond. In fact, Picklock acknowledges it more fully than the play's other characters—in terms of the physical and concrete. He cannot bear to see a son "thrust out of the blood" (5.1.83), he says to Junior, in a passage repeated at 5.2.74. "Thrust" is oddly close to the "trust"

29. The fluidity of early modern inheritance law perhaps informed Jonson's concerns in the play. Judges in the later sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries made land more alienable and "destructible"; that is, made inheritance more fluid, though dynastic impulses occasionally trumped alienability. See Gregory S. Alexander, "The Dead Hand and the Law of Trusts in the Nineteenth Century," *Stanford Law Review* 37, no. 5 (May 1985): 1189-1266. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, though, the current changed: "[e]quity, unlike the common law, tended to look more favorably on the importance of . . . preserving the institution, even at the expense of the freedom of action of the current generation" (P. S. Atiyah, *The Rise and Fall of Freedom of Contract* [1979; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985], 134). I do not wish to argue that *Staple* addresses these topics in any systematic way, but the play's persistent juridical vocabulary invites an acknowledgment of its legal context.

Picklock disavows so sincerely at 5.2.6-7—"What trust? Where does't appear? I have your deed. / Doth your deed specify any trust?" That Jonson puts the rejected "trust" back in Picklock's mouth, albeit in altered form, reinscribes its conceptual import and physical insubstantiality. (It also testifies to Jonson's compulsion, even stronger than most writers', to render his villains more verbally and psychologically complex than all his other characters.) When Pennyboy Junior begins to reconcile with his father, insisting on the trust's reality, Picklock's somatic metaphors reappear; Junior's response quickly moves from the bodily to the abstract. The dialogue counterbalances intangibility with corporeality:

> PICKLOCK. An egg o'the same nest! The father's bird,
>
> It runs in a blood, I see.
>
> PENNYBOY JUNIOR. I'll stop your mouth
>
> PICKLOCK. With what?
>
> PENNYBOY JUNIOR. With truth.
>
> PICKLOCK. With noise! I must have witness.
>
> Where is your witness? You can produce witness?
>
> (5.2.54-57)

Pennyboy Junior's response: "Why, if thou has a conscience, / That is a thousand witnesses" (61-62). The scene bears out the victory of the intangible. In a phrasing both legalistic and material, Pennyboy Junior eventually does "produce" a witness: Tom, the erstwhile barber, has overheard Picklock acknowledging the trust, though Picklock

threatens to accuse him with conspiracy (92). But a notable absence accompanies the Pennyboys' eventual defeat of Picklock. For legal certainty, they need the "absolute deed" (5.1.109), which Picklock has locked away and stored with his crony Lickfinger. But not once does Junior or Canter actually indicate to Picklock possession of the document. Picklock leaves, never to appear again, before we read the following note, "*Young* Peny-boy *discovers it, to his Father, to be his plot of sending for it by the* Porter, *and that he is in possession of the* Deed," which leaves the lawyer out of the loop in any case. For that matter, it is unclear whether the passage is a stage direction or a plot summary. Parr, deciding on the second, relegates it to the collation note. The implied theater audience is out of the loop too, in his edition.[30] The material absence heightens the scene's, and the play's, investment in abstraction. A legal deed is an idea embodied. An absent legal deed is another layer of abstraction, an idea of an idea embodied. That idea is specifically paternal. *Staple*'s hidden deed embodies the legal, social, and economic connections between son and father. And lacking the markers of pregnancy and parturition, an invisible deed, an unseeable act (or fact) is what biological paternity is.

Shakespearean misrecognitions participate in tensions over legitimacy (Lancelot questioning his own origins in the misled Old Gobbo, Leontes suspecting Mamillius's, blind Gloucester's reluctance to favor the legitimate son Edgar). And *Staple*'s misrecognition figures a similar worry, with Pennyboy Junior's inability to see his father

30. Herford and Simpson include it in the margin, following the 1631 John Beale folio printing. See Herford and Simpson, cited in n. 18 above, vol. 8 (1938), 5.3.17. Devra Rowland Kifer also incorporates it in the body of her edition of the play, but moves it to the very beginning of 5.3, making it function as a stage direction. See Kifer, ed., *The Staple of News* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975).

paralleling his failure to be much of an heir, either metaphorically or materially. But for Shakespeare, recognition is restoration. Lancelot and Old Gobbo, Edgar and Gloucester, Pericles and Marina, Leontes and Hermione are reconciled and/or restored to each other. That this dynamic plays out even in *Lear*, with all its losses, underscores the force of Shakespeare's impulse to fuse revelation with affection. To reveal, the reconciliations-cum-recognitions suggest, is to love.[31] But in *Staple*, recognition accompanies separation.[32] The stage direction "*Here his father discovers himself*" introduces a withering disquisition from Canter on his son's inadequacies (4.4.115-179 passim). What physical revelation discloses is not intimacy but the essential gulf between father and child. Oddly enough for the scholarly Jonson, knowledge divides here; to reveal is to reject.

The hostility is not merely paternal. So welcome is the news of his father's death that Junior addresses the bearer, Pennyboy Canter in disguise, as "Founder" from then on. The name simultaneously celebrates the father's supposed death and creates a paternal figure (though perhaps with a Jonsonian play on the word's verb form that encapsulates the son's hostility even to a substitute father). Canter's paternal function is still more obvious when Junior decides his "Founder" will be "Father Rector" of the proposed

31. For a more developed treatment of Shakespearean recognition scenes, see Lawrence Danson, "Shakespeare and the Misrecognition of Fathers and Sons," in *Paternity and Fatherhood: Myths and Realities*, ed. Lieve Spaas and Trista Selous (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 236-245. Among other points, Danson argues that over the course of Shakespeare's career his plays balance inclination toward father-daughter reunions with an evasion of father-son reunions.

32. Cf. *Bartholomew Fair* (perf. 1614) and the puppets whose absence of body renders them morally acceptable (*Bartholomew Fair*, ed. Eugene M. Waith [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963], 5.5). For Jonson, physical revelation evokes repugnance, not pity, so the bodily concealment of the father is ideal.

"Canter's College" (4.4.83). Conversely, Canter adopts the submissive language of childhood, calling himself Junior's "obedient father" (4.4.117); the indignant Mirth picks up the role reversal in her wish to have Canter "disinherited" (Int. 4.62). The words make the father a son, as is the case for *Every Man in His Humour*'s Kno'well. What they point out in this play, though, is a general desire for an abstract paternity, one that transcends a relationship with a particular father.[33] Canter stops being Founder when he reveals himself to his son as Frank Pennyboy: he leaves. The *genitor*'s explicit physical reemergence interrupts his acting as *pater*. His invisibility is what allows the tie between father and child. When he returns at 5.2, visible, his status as father is intact, but his invisibility is replaced by Jonson's, a substitution I discuss below.

Where *Every Man in His Humour*'s Kno'well pursues his son from a slight distance, replicating the umbilicus-free separation of fathers and children, *Staple* keeps the pursuing father in his son's presence, in plain sight and utterly unrecognizable. Although Shakespeare uses similar devices in *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Lear*, Pennyboy Junior's inability to identify his walking, talking father while the two are in constant contact is much less credible than Leontes' brief failure to see that Hermione's "statue" is alive, than Pericles' and Marina's mutual misrecognition after several years apart, than the blinded Gloucester's failure to perceive that Tom of Bedlam is in fact his son. Even *Merchant*'s blind Old Gobbo suspects that the person leading him to Shylock's house is his son, insistent though Lancelot Gobbo is on concealing his identity. In *Staple*,

33. See chap. 2, esp. 67-68, on Kno'well's resemblance to his son.

then, the son's continued misrecognition of his father, fantastic even by the standards of a play unwedded to psychological realism, calls attention to the father's invisibility. It dramatizes the somatic blind spot of paternity and the father's and son's reliance on the word for assurance of their connection.

But the biological invisibility of paternity is not merely unfortunate. The father's disembodiment offers transcendence. With temporal loss in particular, disembodiment is both symptom and cure. Of course, readers often focus on the somatic Jonson. In 1948 Edmund Wilson confidently diagnosed him an "anal erotic," an assessment accepted forty years later by David Riggs and elaborated upon by Bruce Boehrer, whose peristaltic treatment of Jonson's career, *The Fury of Men's Gullets*, takes its title from *Staple* 3.4.45.[34] And Jonsonian physicality extends beyond consumption, digestion, and excretion; "My Picture Left in Scotland" (1619-1620) surrounds a reference to "so much waste" with an admission of his "hundred of gray hairs" and "mountain belly and . . . rocky face."[35] The round number, the rock and mountain, suggest an enduring and immutable bodily presence, but the mass of stone is just a futile image in another country, with the real Jonson vocal and changeable in England. The seat of power, for Jonson, is no seat at all. Abstraction, removed and symbolic, must redeem unpleasant somatic

34. Edmund Wilson, "Morose Ben Jonson," in *The Triple Thinker*s, rev. ed. (New York, 1938), reprinted in *Ben Jonson: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Jonas Barish (Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963), 60-74, 63. David Riggs, in *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), concludes that in *The Case is Altered* Jonson is "regress[ing] to the anal stage" and metaphorically "soil[ing] his foster parent with excrement" (31). Also see Bruce Boehrer, *The Fury of Men's Gullets: Ben Jonson and the Digestive Canal* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). Digestion is an apt metaphor for the processes I describe in chap. 2, perhaps more so than for *Staple*.

35. Ben Jonson, "My Picture Left in Scotland," *The Underwood* 9, in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ed. Hugh Maclean (New York: Norton, 1974), 57-58, ll. 16, 14, 17.

realities. (Perhaps the most notable example of the confluence of power and absence in Jonsonian tragedy is Tiberius's letter to the senate in 1603's *Sejanus*, the remote emperor's bodily perversions expunged by his long-distance words.) Part of the value of the abstract and the symbol is their escape from mortality, although like the well-wrought urn, the abstract in itself possesses a sort of deadness, an absence of life rather than an end of it.[36] An older writer's play, *Staple* avoids a focus on the concrete and particularized, vulnerable to the possibility that the observable, material, individuated world is all. (One critic's typographical error in calling *Staple* a "mortality play" is telling.[37]) Its abstraction is the consolation of philosophy. That a father-child tie animates the play would seem to counter the abstraction, but the play makes that bond abstract too, and in doing so lets it be an emblem of continuity.

Immutability and immortality are perhaps only subsets of larger concerns. As Freud writes of Judaism's god, who can neither be seen nor represented with images, the invisible father liberates the child from imprisonment in the empirical. Likewise, the sons' "disappearing" the father in the primal horde motivates imagined paternities, compensatory developments in law, religion, and abstract thought.[38] (Carol Mossman

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36. The stroke Jonson suffered, probably shortly after *Staple*'s composition, is a terrible encapsulation of this paradox, fundamentally altering the body but also freezing it into place. Jonson's first stroke, in 1626, rendered him at least partially bedridden (Riggs 298-99). The second, in late 1628 or early 1629, was paralyzing (Riggs 307). *Volpone*, the subject of chapter 6, makes this paradox more clear; *Staple*, though not a late-life retreat from the issue, addresses it more in its aesthetics than in its plot.

37. See Lanier, "The Prison-House of the Canon," 254.

38. On God and the father's disembodiment, see *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Words of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth and the Institute for Psychoanalysis, 1953-1974), 23:114. In *The Future of an Illusion*, published twelve years earlier, Freud had already described monotheistic faith as a neurotic's father-fantasy (ed. and trans. James Strachey [New York: Norton, 1989], 18). The later formulation acknowledges the

sums up the father's situation neatly: "by virtue of being no longer bodily accessible, he has become ubiquitous.")[39] *Staple*'s mostly invisible father accompanies a flurry of excursions into the abstract—finance, fictionalized journalism, law—both mistrusted and productive. Symbolic rather than fully materialized, the Freudian father, and Canter, amplify the force of the symbol itself.[40] One might argue that *Staple* legitimizes the institution of fatherhood via the financial and the textual; Picklock's avaricious musings at 5.1.121-125 remind us that any money lost by Canter will eventually be money lost to Junior as well. But in defeating Picklock father and son use the law's fusion of action and abstraction for their joint purpose. So what *Staple* does is legitimate the symbolic via the institution of fatherhood. The play bases the reunion on a fleeting verbal exchange rather than on more easily authenticated visual evidence. The physical component of the law, the missing document, becomes nearly irrelevant: the reunion of father and child authenticates law instead.

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uses of such a fantasy. On the "primal horde" and its replacement of the murdered father with ethical systems, see *Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Psychic Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. A. A. Brill (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 2000), esp. 235-243, 246-48. Freud's narratives, of course, resemble just-so stories, but these are lent weight by more recent developments in paternity and fatherhood: as physical paternity has become easier to demonstrate, fathers' legal authority over their children has in many ways diminished. Perhaps the voluntarism of fatherhood before physical paternity could be established lent it moral weight.

39. Carol Mossman, "DNA and the Stakes in Embodying Maternity," 40-48 in Spaas and Selous, *Paternity and Fatherhood*, 41. Mossman extends Freud's idea beyond the father to the son: "But to the extent that authority depends on detachment from the material, and then its transcendence, abstraction is also the narrative goal for the son, and the son's quest for identity and legitimacy might be read as the performance or re-enactment of disembodiment" (42-43). Pennyboy Junior, however, is considerably more visible to the other characters in the play as himself, and as heir, than his father is visible as a father. Nor does he transcend materiality.

40. Marta Straznicky, discussing *Staple* among other plays, notes the general tendency for female readers to be represented as embodied but inept, male readers as discerning but disembodied. See her "Reading Through the Body: Women and Printed Drama," in *The Book of the Play*, 59-79.

The evasions of the father's body might call to mind *Merchant*'s castration urges. But there are no castration references in *The Staple of News*. In fact, the play's most notable psychosexual feature is that it has no psychosexual feature. Only money is sexy, and only in the most figurative way. *Staple*, like *Twelfth Night*, is pre-neutered, and in this a continuation rather than a duplication of *Merchant*. In a different way the plays are identical. Though Portia bemoans her father's will, in large part it gets her the suitor of her choice. *Merchant*'s casket plot betokens a desire to escape the father's domination. It also serves as a wistful portrait of a father's continuance after death, his benevolent verbal power over his child's wellbeing. Like Portia, Pennyboy Junior gets fatherly verbal instruction (from his Founder) and economic power (from the legacy) without the presence of the father himself, or so he thinks. Picklock suggests that the inheritance be held in "mortmain" (literally, "dead hand"), a restriction of property to forms of de-individualized control such as one finds in corporations and charities (4.4.113). Mortmain would appear to depersonalize inheritance altogether, remove it from the relationship of father to son. But the *OED* cites another use of the word first appearing in 1625, the year of *Staple*'s earliest performance: mortmain can also suggest the legator's posthumous authority over the legatee.[41] The hand, dead, continues to touch the living. What the juxtaposition of *Merchant* and *Staple* suggests, then, is the centrality of the notion of the *transcendent* father, one who exists verbally despite his apparent death or physical

41. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd. ed., s.v. "mortmain."

absence.[42] It is primarily the acknowledged *bodily* presence of the father that the plays' various scenarios downplay—Portia's father's death, Jessica's escape from Shylock's house, Pennyboy Canter's pretence of having shuffled off this mortal coil. The castration references in *Merchant* serve not only the religious, economic, and sexual aims I examine in chapter 3, but also the familiar hunger for a disembodied model of reproduction discussed in chapter 1's treatment of *Twelfth Night*. And like Jonson and *Staple*, they serve a disembodied model of paternity and a validation of the symbolic.

"Rascal, sits my ruff well?" Junior asks his linener. The approving response: "In print" (1.2.31-32). *Staple* formulates almost everything as verbal and textual: law, wealth, food, drink, fashion too. As early as the second act, we see the play comparing law and other forms of linguistic production. Some likenesses are ambivalent. Broker reassures one of Lady Pecunia's suitors that Pecunia's women, Statute and Band, can be helpful; the second's textual connections are nearly as important as the first's. "[Mistress Statute] is a judge's daughter / But somewhat stately; th'other, Mistress Band, / Her father's but a scrivener, but she can / Almost as much with my lady as the other" (2.2.27-30). Band's verbal origins rank low, effective though she is. Her father's position as scribe is no more ambiguous than son and heir Madrigal's place as poet. Pecunia's secretary, Broker, imagines Madrigal making his inheritance the subject of poetry: he could "make an epitaph" on the land (2.4.143). Almanac envisions an actual transformation of land into

42. Stephannie S. Gearhart, discussing the representation of the power of the near-death speech, suggests that the father's voice "heard from beyond the grave" in *Staple* is part of a paternal fantasy of control. See her "'Of an Age': Generational Politics in Early Modern England" (PhD diss., Lehigh University, 2004), 159.

word, opining of the "dull element" that the "sweet songster / Shall rarify't into air" (156-58). Here again the play simultaneously urges both the reification of the verbal symbol—the metaphorical alchemy that is poetry is to become a more literal, physical change—and the apotheosis of the symbol in itself. But the poetry proposed by Almanac also changes something (land inheritance, presumably paternal) into nothing (air). The poem, as symbol, wipes out both the father's last trace and the son's assumption of the privileges and responsibilities of male adulthood.

Quite different is the import of Junior's description of his twenty-first birthday, "the day / I do write man" (1.1.27). In this earlier formulation, representation by word is integral to maturity. But abstract verbal symbols are sullied in the play—in the activities of the professional writers and publishers *Staple* satirizes, the jeering word games Canter criticizes as not "grateful" at 4.1.10, the "canting" rhetoric of poetry mocked at 4.4.54-60, and even the maligned credit industry, relying on verbal sureties. "The plague and all diseases light on him / Knows not to keep his word," Pennyboy Senior rants. "I'd keep my word sure! / I hate that man that will not keep his word. / When did I break my word?" (2.3.4-7). Renewed trust in the legitimacy of verbal representation, seen in *Staple*'s treatment of the father-child mastery of the law, is also necessary to justify the verbal occupation that is Jonson's work.

As for drama's similarity to the verbal production that is news, the title of the play itself is of course identical to the title of the publisher Jonson mocks. Jonson's dramatic output is distressingly similar to the fly-by-night textual apparatus the play satirizes, the

nominal likeness suggests, even though parts of the play downplay the importance of labels.[43] After receiving various insults from Almanac, Shunfield, and Fitton, Pennyboy Senior argues that

> . . . as for titles, be they rogue or rascal
> Or what your worships fancy, let 'em pass
> As transitory things. They're mine today
> And yours tomorrow.
>
> (2.4.87-90)

The Prologue for the Court more directly addresses the play's title in the first two lines below:

> . . . although our title, sir, be News,
> We yet adventure here to tell you none,
> But show you common follies, and so known,
> That though they are not truths, th'innocent Muse
> Hath made so like, as fant'sy could them state
> Or poetry, without scandal, imitate.
>
> (9-14)

43. In 1973 Donald F. McKenzie read the Staple as rivaling the theater ("*The Staple of News* and the Late Plays," *A Celebration of Ben Jonson: Papers Presented at the University of Toronto in October 1972*, ed. William Blissett, Julian Patrick, and R. W. Van Fossen [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973], 83-128); Paul Yachnin notes specific points of similarity between the news company and the Blackfriars (Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England*, 194).

But the Prologue argues two opposing positions at once. The first is that labels can be irrelevant—the play's title itself is misleading (9-10). The second is that what matters is representation (follies "so like"), not absolute reality ("not truths"). Like the success of the news company, the Prologue implies the separability of verifiable fact from value. Imitative poetic abstraction is what matters. The symbolic, offering a link between what *has* happened and what *can* happen, defeats the "transitory" (89). Its disconnect from the real provides invulnerability. In its transferable nature ("mine today / And yours tomorrow"), it offers continuity, not just change.

Part of what distinguishes Jonson's performance of his vocation from bastard journalism—that is, what separates the Staple of News from *The Staple of News*—is his metatheatricalism. His frequent mention between the acts forces an awareness of the play's provenance in him rather than in unknown sources of rumors. The news, in passive voice, "are made" and "vented forth" (1.2.51-52); information comes from entities known only as "They" (3.2.21, 53, 59, 75, 97). "Whence ha' you this news?" Pennyboy Junior asks. The response: "From a right hand, I assure you" (3.2.83). The Hebrew "Benjamin" is commonly etymologized as "son of the right hand," and the line echoes "child of my right hand" in "On My First Son" (1616), so Jonson's sly self-reference has filial links.[44] But its subtlety is such that his claim to authoring the spurious news is limited. His paternal ties to *Staple*, on the other hand, legitimate the play. However, Jonson's authorial presence in *Staple*'s frame narrative, giving the play a pedigree, is subject to the

44. "On My First Son," *Epigrams* 45, line 1.

same paradox involved in paternity: the putative but abstract and invisible father is the paradigmatic one.

Staple's link of drama with the parent-child trope is almost immediate. In the Induction, the Prologue tells choric gossips Tattle, Censure, Expectation, and Mirth that "[t]he truth is, there are a set of gamesters within in travail of a thing called a play, and would fain be delivered of it; and they have entreated me to be their man-midwife, the Prologue, for they are like to have a hard labour on't" (55-59).[45] The father is notably missing from the equation, just as he is in the play's second use of "midwife" in a passage about the Staple I quoted earlier: "You must be a midwife, sir! / Or else the son of a midwife (pray you pardon me!)— / Have helped it forth so happily" (1.5.77-79). In each case, the parents suffer physically: "travail," "hard labour," "sweat and freezing," "broken sleeps" (Ind. 56, Ind. 59, 1.5.71). They stand for sacrifice. Mirth's description suggests the same of the playwright: "a poet hath two heads as a drum has, one for making, one for repeating; and his repeating head is all to pieces. They may gather it up i'th tiring-house, for he hath torn the book in a poetical fury, and put himself to silence in dead sack" (69-73). The missing father is of course Jonson. His production ("making") is going more smoothly than his reproduction ("repeating"); the "repeating head" gone "all to pieces" indicates temporal discontinuity. As I suggest below, the interludes between the acts, or "intermeans" as Jonson calls them, gradually *de*fragment him, but for the play

45. See Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (London: Routledge, 2004), esp. ch. 3, for the Elizabethan backdrop of *Staple*'s Prologue. The prologue's simultaneous liminality and function as establisher of rules, as discussed by Bruster and Weimann, parallel *Staple*'s representation of paternity.

to be fully realized and for him to be an effective creator, this eventual wholeness must be succeeded by his disappearance. (The dynamic is almost deist.) The Induction offers an initially concrete and somatic description of Jonson as maker: "Yonder he is within . . . rolling himself up and down like a tun i'the midst of 'em, and spurges. . . . His sweating put me in mind of a good Shroving-dish" (62-66). The "sweating" of *Staple*'s creation recalls the "sweat" of the Staple's creation (1.5.71); it and "spurges" together suggest both procreation's literal fluidity and its potential for mutability. But like Pennyboy Canter's body, the poet's is eventually concealed.[46] The author's corporeality dwindles to match Canter's paternal invisibility, ceding its place to commentary about his creation by four gossips who remain onstage for the duration of the play.

Jonson as embodied author is absent from the first intermean, though Tattle acknowledges his existence. She reports that according to her husband, "'[h]e is an arrant learn'd man that made [*The Devil is an Ass*], and can write, they say, and I am foully deceived but he can read too'" (Int 1.40-42); Mirth reports hearing that "he was a profane poet and all his plays had devils in them. That he kept school upo' the stage, could conjure there, above the School of Westminster and Doctor Lamb too" (45-47). In the second intermean Jonson's physical self is still absent. However, a reference to his authorship remains: Tattle says that Canter's remark about Pocahontas at 2.5.121-24 was said "like a paltry poet" (Int. 2.43-44). The intermean itself enacts his paltriness. Jonson

46. Jonson himself, as far as we know, was more a verbal than a physical father; the traces we have of his fatherhood are testaments to linguistic presence and bodily absence. Jonson's first son died while Jonson was away, a fact unmentioned in "On My First Son." *Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*, though, includes a compelling narrative of Jonson's vision of his dying son. See Herford and Simpson 1:166-172.

counters that diminishment in a note "To the Readers" immediately following, in which "the author" (3) urges readers to "consider the news here vented to be none of his news" (7-8), with

> . . . no syllable of truth in them; than which there cannot be a greater disease in nature, or a fouler scorn put upon the times. And so apprehending it, you shall do the author and your own judgement a courtesy, . . . If you have the truth, rest quiet, and consider that *Ficta voluptatis causa, sint proxima veris*.
>
> (13-19)

That untruthfulness is detestable comes through clearly. The import of the Horace tag is less apparent. Rendered elsewhere by Jonson as "Let what thou feign'st for pleasure sake, be neare / The truth," it acknowledges that Jonson's fictions are *not* truth, even if "*proxima*" is more literally translated not merely as "neare," but as "closest."[47] All told, the passage underscores the resemblance between news and drama, with an accompanying need for drama to set itself apart as a source of authenticity.

Aid is not forthcoming from the third intermean. In it Censure abominates any schoolmaster who is "a conjurer or a poet or that had any acquaintance with a poet. They make all their scholars playboys! Is't not a fine sight to see all our children made interluders?" (Int. 3.44-46). Further conflating the Staple with *Staple*, she hopes that

47. Ben Jonson, *Q. Horatius Flaccus: his Art of poetry. Englished by Ben: Jonson. With other workes of the author, never printed before* (London: I. Okes for Iohn Benson, 1640), 20, ll. 483-84. Early English Books Online, http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839963 (STC 2nd ed. / 13798).

ministers will "not teach 'em to speak plays and act fables of false news in this manner" (54-55). The intermean leaves Jonson in a bind: how is he to distinguish his pedigreed play from the anonymous news while retaining the advantages of invisibility and abstraction?

Jonson's paternal body returns in the fourth intermean, but only in vague terms. Angry at Canter's revival, Expectation protests Jonson's plotting: "Absurdity on him, for a huge overgrown play-maker! Why should he make him live again, when they and we all thought him dead?" (8-10).[48] At this point Jonson's formerly broken body is whole but grotesque, "huge overgrown." The "him" is Canter, but the pronoun's ambiguity is telling; the father's unmasking must be balanced by the author's physical departure from the text. The play has already hinted at the similarity between Pennyboy Canter and Jonson in the frequent references to Canter's dining with his son and the hack journalists in the Apollo room, where Jonson met with his circle of younger poets.[49] In the fourth intermean, the connection is explicit. Mirth objects that Canter is "akin to the poet" (Int. 4.4-5); "for he had the chiefest part in his play" (6). Tattle concurs (7).

The gossips represent Canter as highly embodied. Mirth cannot imagine that the other characters would allow a "foolish old fornicating father to ravish away his son's

48. The comment about Canter is echoed by journalist John Pory about Jonson: in September 1632 he wrote to Sir Thomas Puckering, first baronet of Weston, mentioning "Ben Jonson, who I thought had been dead" (Herford and Simpson 1: 192). The letter's tone makes it impossible to tell whether Pory is joking at Jonson's expense, though his journalism and the letter's date, not long after the 1631 printing of the play, argue for a satirical reading.

49. *Staple* makes eight mentions of the Apollo, where Pennyboy Canter goes with his protégé/son and the son's new friends. In discussing this link between Canter and Jonson, Riggs argues that Junior represents Charles Stuart, caught between wise Jonson on one side and shrill journalists on the other. But while the Staple's reportage indicates a certain topicality, the play's references to contemporary politics are less consistent than its concern with the nature of verbal representation.

mistress" (Int. 4.39-40); for her, Canter's actions are "a plain piece of political incest" (43). Expectation anatomizes him more thoroughly: "Nay, then let Master Doctor dissect him, have him opened, and his tripes translated to Lickfinger to make a probation dish of" (58-60). The anger, and the physical focus, touches Jonson too: Censure thinks it would be ideal for "both the poet and himself to ask them all forgiveness" (66-67), preferably in "two large sheets of paper" (69). For Expectation, it would be just as good for author and father to "stand in a skin of parchment," whichever the court prefers (70-71). Censure wishes the writing surfaces "filled with news" whether made of paper or flesh (72); journalism is still more appealing than playwrighting.

For Jonson, literature, along with generational continuity, opposes itself to journalism's transience. As one reading of *Volpone* has it, Jonson figures the draw of news as "the deadly lure of the present and the denial of eternal truths."[50] "Eternal truths" is perhaps redundant. Jonsonian truth is *whatever lasts*. The fictionality of the news reports is only part of what makes them of merely temporary interest; their other flaw is their very specificity—in this play, a trait equivalent to ephemerality. But *Staple* and its starkly imagined father and son, unmoored from realistic particulars in their very abstraction, counter unpredictable change, as journalism does not and as the law might be imagined to. (In that sense the play *is* a trust, supplementing legality.) But abstraction also works against the appearance of authenticity. The figures who criticize Jonson and the play prevent any absorption into *Staple*. Their commentary, though legitimizing the

50. Mark Z. Muggli, "Ben Jonson and the Business of News," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 323-340, 324.

play as a product of a known entity, also makes its world more pallidly unreal. Even their language makes the rest of the play seem less genuine. The gossips' prose shows up the artifice of its poetry, suspends the suspension of disbelief.[51] Their disappearance combines with what initially appears the writer's loss—the vanishing of his paternal body after the Induction— to make what had seemed *merely* words into something more completely authentic.[52]

After act 4 and the fourth intermean, the returned father stands in for the author, whose body is gone. Pennyboy Canter may come back as the visible, living, recognized father only in Jonson's absence. The acceptance of the father-son tie's abstraction is a crucial step toward faith in the symbolic, shaken by the Staple's excesses and renewed by the Pennyboys' familial ratification of the law. Because father and son certify the primacy of the word, *Staple* and the disappeared Jonson gain authority. To some degree, Jonson acquiesces to the gossips' wishes of the last intermean. He does cover himself in a sheet of paper—in the form of the Epilogue's sonnet—and translates his own tripes, though not Canter's. The Induction represents Jonson's body in concrete detail, but he has "torn the book . . . and put himself to silence" (72-73); the Epilogue reverses those priorities. The visibly imagined and particularized authorial body is gone. Jonson's presence is only words, and physically vulnerable. If the play has not pleased, the sonnet reports, the author "vows the next fair day, he'll have us shoot / The same match o'er for

51. Jonas Barish, in *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), points out that Jonson avoids prose after *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). The gossips' commentary in *Staple* is among the very few exceptions (240).

52. Lanier makes a similar observation about the Induction (259).

him, if you'll come to't" (13-14). The Epilogue and the play end with a physically abstracted maker's hopeful vision of continuity. And in *Staple*'s appearance on the long-abandoned public stage, Jonson becomes a prodigal playwright as well as author of a prodigal-son play, returning to his theatrical origins. As for the play as dotage, if dotage is childhood's reappearance in old age—that is, a fusion of the past with the present—then *Staple* is that too.

Chapter 5

Mind over *Mater* in *The Tempest*

> PHILOMATHES. What can be the cause that there are twentie women given to [witch]craft, where ther is one man?
> EPISTAMON. The reason is easier, for as that sexe is frailer then man is, so is it easier to be intrapped in these grosse snares of the Devill . . . .
> —James VI, *Daemonologie*[1]

> MIRANDA. Sir, are you not my father?
> —Shakespeare, *The Tempest*[2]

Observers of the Tudors have often noted Elizabeth I's self-presentation as mother to her people; her rhetoric, no less than her occasionally visible breasts, applied maternal imagery to politics.[3] Though she might not ever marry and bear children, she said to the Speaker of the House in 1559, she would nonetheless remain a "good mother of her Contreye." She had inherited the metaphor from her cousin and former queen, Mary Tudor. Even her identity as virgin queen recalled maternity in the form of the Virgin Mother.[4] But especially after the accession of James I in 1603, what Jonathan Crewe calls

1. James VI, *Daemonologie* (1597; New York: Da Capo, 1969), 10.

2. *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 1.2.55. All following citations to *The Tempest* are parenthetical and follow this edition.

3. On Elizabeth's breast-baring costumes and their effects on her viewers, see the startling contemporary accounts cited in Louis A. Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representations* 1, no. 2 (1983): 61-94, esp. 63-64.

4. Elizabeth is quoted in Christine Coch, "'Mother of my Contreye': Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood," in *The Mysteries of Elizabeth I: Selections from* English Literary Renaissance, ed. Kirby Farrell and Kathleen M. Swaim (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 134-161, quotation on 134. For Mary Tudor's self-identification as mother of her people, see Coch 135. On the intersections of Catholic and post-Catholic Marianism and Elizabeth's virginal imagery, see

the "repaternalization" of culture and politics became a high priority for both king and court.[5] Upon the accession, Jonson wrote the following tribute both to James's rank and to his gender:

> How dear a father they did now enjoy,
> That came to save, what discord would destroy:
> And entering with the power of a king,
> The temp'rance of a private man did bring.[6]

James is not a "parent," but a "father"; not the more gender-neutral "prince," but a "king"; not a "person," but a "man." Addressing Parliament six years later, James noted that kings may be seen as "[f]athers of families: for a King is trewly *Parens patriae*, the politique father of his people."[7] A line of readers including Peter Erickson, Coppélia Kahn, David Sundelson, Valerie Traub, and most compellingly, Janet Adelman, have claimed that *The Tempest*, along with Shakespeare's other late romances, likewise participates in a conservative reestablishment of the father as social linchpin, burying the

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Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth 1 and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), esp. ch. 2, "Elizabeth as Sacred Monarch," 10-38; also see Elizabeth Hageman and Katherine Conway, *Resurrecting Elizabeth I in Seventeenth-Century England* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), esp. 72, 116.

5. Crewe uses the term in "Baby Killers," *Differences: a Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 7, no. 3 (1995): 1-23, quotation on 6. Jonathan Goldberg makes a similar point in *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), esp. 42.

6. Ben Jonson, *A Panegyre: on the Happy Entrance of James, Our Sovereign, to his First High Session of Parliament in This his Kingdom, the 19 of March 1603*, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 335-340, ll. 138-141.

7. "A Speach to the Lords and Commons of the Parliament at White-Hall" (1610), in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 179-203, quotation on 181.

mother and validating patriarchy.[8] The conclusion is reasonable, but not so strongly warranted that it should be a verdict reiterated again and again. Indeed, the need to repeat this finding so often suggests an unease with it. As I will suggest, Stuart repaternalization often took a distinctly transgendered form, admitting of female influence, that shows up in contemporary political documents and in dramatic texts that focus on witchcraft, such as *The Tempest*. This chapter argues that the play eventually resuscitates the discourse of the mother, often a discourse of embodiment, *within* the less somatized figure of the father, and it does so in part through a redistribution of moral value between the gendered figures of the witch and the magician.

Long before the Stuart accession, the threatening physicality and the mystery of motherhood sometimes combined to make maternity a culturally vulnerable institution; what Frances Dolan describes as the "fear of, fascination with, and hostility toward maternal power" in early modern England informed a wide variety of discourses.[9] While the phrase "the miracle of childbirth" now functions mostly as a cliché, childbirth's miraculousness—its unpredictability, inexplicability, and momentousness—could be deeply troubling to a people who had not yet discovered the human ovum and saw

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8. See Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), Peter Erickson, *Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare's Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), Coppélia Kahn, *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), and Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London: Routledge, 1992). For a discussion of royal repaternalization in its transgendered forms, see Curtis Perry, "Nourish-Fathers and Pelican Daughters: Kingship, Gender, and Bounty in *King Lear* and *Macbeth*," in *The Making of Jacobean Culture: James I and the Renegotiation of Elizabethan Literary Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 115-149. Though Perry's chapter focuses on *Lear* and *Macbeth*, his arguments anticipate mine in many respects, calling Lear and Duncan "self-replicating fathers" (123).

9. Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 96.

women as intrinsically biologically inferior, yet relied on unknowable processes of the female body for reproduction. Conception and parturition might appear almost magical events. Early moderns were fairly certain of the father's role in conception but considerably less clear on the mother's. Particularly in the Galenic view, the mother provided the raw material causes; the father, the efficient ones.[10] The high road to social immortality through reproduction, then, lay in the father, who contributed the blueprints that were merely followed inside the womb. Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 describes semen as "spirit," a word that appears twenty-seven times in *The Tempest*, in the sense of both "vital energy" and "transcending force." In contrast, the raw physical materials of maternity, as the semantically complex postpartum purification ritual of churching suggests, were suspect in a culture that valued the eternal soul over the mortal body.[11]

Among other scholars, Deborah Willis, Brian Levack, and Alan Macfarlane have demonstrated that although the extent to which midwives were targeted as witches has been overstated, the early modern experience of motherhood and its accompanying rhetoric of embodiment overlapped with the discourse of witchcraft, sometimes fatally.

10. See Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990). Also see Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). The Aristotelian view is similar to Galen's. See *De generatione animalium: On the Generation of Animals*, trans. A. L. Peck (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), I, 725a11-728b22.

11. On controversies over churching, see David Cressy, "Purification, Thanksgiving, and the Churching of Women in Post-Reformation England," *Past & Present* 141, no. 1 (1993): 106-146. For accounts of other early modern reactions to childbirth, see for example Ralph Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (New York: Longman, 1985), esp. 129-130, and Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin, a Seventeenth-Century Clergyman: An Essay in Historical Anthropology* (New York: Norton, 1970), esp. 81-91 and 163-182. A particularly striking narrative of childbirths is *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton*, ed. Charles Jackson (Durham: Surtees Society, 1875). Adelman's *Suffocating Mothers* is perhaps the best psychoanalytically-inflected study of the maternal body as represented in early modern literature.

Lying-in maids, who to some degree functioned as substitute mothers, were accused of witchcraft disproportionately often. Frequently, new mothers were their accusers. And while the accused were likely to be women well past their childbearing years, their demonic familiars were regularly imagined as unnatural, malformed children who suckled from the infamous "witch's teat," an extra nipple that made the witch exaggeratedly and grotesquely maternal.[12] Willis's Kleinian argument that the English witch-hunts emerged from repressed hostility to the image of the bad mother is controversial. But however complex the picture—for one thing, most witches in Normandy, Estonia, and Iceland were men[13]—witchcraft, motherhood, and bodies made vulnerable to women are clearly interrelated in early modern Europe as a whole. Western European witchcraft texts such as the *Daemonologie* (1597), Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger's *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), and even Reginald Scot's skeptical *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) repeatedly assert that the vast majority of magicians are men; witches, on the other hand, are usually women. More recent historians of early modern

12. For two influential studies of early modern witchcraft, see Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), and Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987); more recent studies include Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995) and Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts, eds., *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For a discussion of the connections between the child-care industry and witchcraft accusations—a link that earlier accounts exaggerated—see Merry Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 230-35.

13. See Lara Apps and Andrew Gow, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 2. Apps and Gow argue that scholars have distorted our understanding of early modern witchcraft by discounting the centrality of male witches.

witch hunts validate this claim.[14] Contemporary witchcraft theorists accounted for the gender imbalance by the thesis that women were morally and spiritually weaker than men and are thus more easily tempted by the devil, a position represented in the headnote from the *Daemonologie*. This feminine spiritual weakness leads, counterintuitively, to worldly strength, albeit in the form of satanic powers. Prospero, in his witch-like actions, is not only declassed by also feminized. These same drops in status paradoxically win him back political power at the end of the play.

In fact, some authorities seemed to conflate witchery with any female sexual aggression: several chapters of the widely influential *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), for example, are devoted to "How, as it were, [witches] Deprive Man of his Virile Member," describing in great detail how various men discover that their genitalia have been removed (one particularly enterprising witch has a tree full of collected penises, the largest among them a priest's) and are forced to threaten or beg the witches to return them. Scot, doubtful yet fascinated, repeats many of these stories a century later in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*.[15] The post-Marian early modern mother herself, whose sexual nature cannot be doubted, is perhaps a ripe target for conflation with the witch. Dramatic treatments of witchcraft are equally steeped in gender and sexuality. A few years before *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*'s witches are destructively sexual women, threatening to "drain . .

14. Clive Holmes, "Women: Witnesses and Witches," *Past and Present* 140, no. 1 (1993), 45-78, 51. Holmes distinguishes between popular and élite misogyny but concludes that in any case "the mysterious powers that constituted witchcraft would normally be possessed by women" (51).

15. See Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, ed. Montague Summers (New York: Dover, 1971), 54-61, and Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, ed. Montague Summers (Suffolk: John Rodker, 1930), 44-46.

. dry" a vulnerable shipmaster through incessant "do[ing]."[16] Jonson's witches in the 1609 *Masque of Queens* carry "ointment pots at their girdles" to anoint the "great buck goat" and cock they ride on. One harvests a mandrake root, thought both aphrodisiac and narcotic, before pronouncing a charm so that a "magic birth be bred."[17] Apart from the sexual associations, witchcraft was considered a matrilineal inheritance: one English trial transcript notes that these supernatural powers passed "by discent . . .from the grandmother to the mother."[18]

To return to my central text, *The Tempest* initially appears to do just what early moderns very occasionally did in their effort to defeat witches: kill off the troublesome old mothers. Miranda lives on an island with Prospero, her dead mother a vague memory. Caliban's mother Sycorax, in Prospero's term a "hag," has long since been felled by Prospero's superior magic. And Prospero's fatherhood is unlike women's motherhood. In several of the play's passages he represents the link between himself and Miranda as verbal, almost mystical—their connection, in his perspective, results from speech acts rather than from a prior sex act. "[Thy mother] *said* thou wast my daughter," he tells

16. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Routledge, 1984), 1.3.18, 10. Other citations are parenthetical.

17. Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Queens*, in *Court Masques: Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments, 1605-1640*, ed. David Lindley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), l. 28, 227 n. 77, l. 292. On mandrake root, sometimes called man-root or mandragora, see Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55, 62, 65, 71-72; for Italian representations of mandrake, see Valeria Finucci, *The Manly Masquerade: Masculinity, Paternity, and Castration in the Italian Renaissance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), 83, 88, 94, 96.

18. British Library Additional MS. 36674, *Trial of Edward Bull and Joan Greedy for Bewitching Edward Dynham*, f. 190. Cited in Holmes, "Women: Witnesses and Witches," 51. Recorded witchcraft persecutions peaked in the 1580s and 1590s (see C. L'Estrange Ewen, ed., *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials* [New York: Dial, 1929], 180-85); the matrilineally heritable power of witchcraft drew most attention in the decades when succession anxiety was peaking.

Miranda (1.2.57, my italics throughout), and for him, this *saying* is where the tie lies. "Thy father / Was Duke of Milan, and his only heir / And princess no worse issued," as Prospero puts it (57-59); his indirect language turns Miranda's conception and birth from a somatic process into a stately narrative, with the illeism distancing him from that process even more.

Prospero's linkage of the word with the biological bond parallels general early modern perceptions of older men. In the 1607 edition of the Oxford scholar Henry Cuffe's *The Differences of the Ages of Man's Life*, Cuffe writes that "old men, the nigher they are to their end, they much more desire to have their memory not only by children and posterity, but even by the speeches and deeds fore-uttered and performed in their life." "Knowledge," Cuffe explains in a striking denigration of the nonverbal, "cannot be manifested but by utterance." As Bruce R. Smith notes, Prospero typifies the supposedly male and geriatric need for verbal expression.[19] Interacting with Miranda, he is desperate for a listener: "The very minute bids thee ope thine ear. / Obey, and be attentive" (1.2.37-38). In the middle of the narrative of Antonio's betrayal, he breaks off—"Dost thou attend me?"—and follows with "thou attend'st not!" and "Dost thou hear?" (78, 87, 105). Ever teacherly, and ever spiritual, he protests,

I pray thee mark me;

I thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated

To closeness and the bettering of my mind

19. Henry Cuffe, *The Differences of the Ages of Man's Life* (London: Arnold Hatfield for Martin Clearke, 1607), 131-32. Cited in Bruce R. Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 82.

> With that which, but by being so retired,
> O'er-prized all popular rate, in my false brother
> Awaked an evil nature . . . .
>
> (1.2.88-93)

Prospero's ultraverbal nurturing and academic values (he also refers to himself as Miranda's "schoolmaster" [172]) appear to accord with the sort of fathering recommended by Erasmus and other humanists: while the mother should form the child's bodily health through nursing, the father, followed by a succession of male tutors, should form the child's mind through the teaching of letters.[20] (As chapter four indicates, work by Douglas Brooks and others demonstrates that this association of paternity, the intellectual, and the verbal came to influence the rhetoric of the print industry and vice-versa.[21]) In *The Tempest*, at any rate, Prospero's arrival on the island with little more than his child and "volumes" that he "prize[s] above [his] dukedom" sets the stage for an especially intellectual fatherhood (167-68). Prospero represents Sycorax's maternity, on the other hand, as corruptly physical: her "littered" child, a "freckled whelp, hag-born," was "got by the devil himself / upon [his] wicked dam" (1.2.282, 285, 323-24). (Jonathan

20. See, for example, Erasmus, "The New Mother" (1526), in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 268-285. For a discussion of educational tracts by women, see Edith Snook, "'His open side our book': Meditation and Education in Elizabeth Grymeston's *Miscelanea Meditations Memoratives*," in *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2000), 163-175.

21. See *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*, ed. Douglas A. Brooks (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

Goldberg calls Caliban a "maculate conception.") [22] Sycorax was "grown into a hoop" with age, Prospero reports, with the image one of paralysis by one's own flesh (259). And the witch-mother's "earthy" commands disgust Ariel, whom she confines in a tight space as punishment (273-77).

Prospero's different conceptions of female and male parenthood are not isolated cultural instances. From "earthly" wombs to "spiritual" semen, from Elizabeth Tudor's bodily displays of sexuality and maternalism to James Stuart's linguistic attempts to take care of his subjects through pamphleteering, early modern English culture maintained a divide between male and female parenthood.[23] Humanism and Protestantism both encouraged mothers to take more responsibility for their children's intellectual education than medieval customs had,[24] and by 1550 conduct literature emphasized the wife's function in caring for small children over her role as producer of goods or household manager, but many humanists and Protestant clergy opined that maternal nurture and education should stop at a very young age, to be replaced by male tuition. Social historians suggest that male authorities in particular were eager to confine female

22. Jonathan Goldberg, The Tempest *in the Caribbean* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2004), 44.

23. "A Counterblaste to Tobacco" was first printed in 1604; "The Declaration of Sports," in 1617. On James as a specifically verbal and in fact print-based father-king, see Howard Marchitello, "*Pater patriae*: James I and the Imprint of Prerogative," in *Printing and Parenting* 302-324.

24. On this point, see Betty S. Travitsky, "The New Mother of the English Renaissance (1489-1659): A Descriptive Catalogue," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 82, no. 1 (1979): 63-89. Travitsky cites Juan Luis Vives and Sir Thomas More as among the earliest modern promulgators of maternal education; Mathew Griffeth and William Gouge were two of their more domestically focused seventeenth-century counterparts (65-67).

contributions to their young charges to the physical realm.[25] One early seventeenth-century tract on maternity, for example, dedicates a sizable section to examining wet-nurses' breasts for the proper hue and proportions. Given the relatively high death rates among children sent out to nurse, attention to physical detail must have seemed warranted.[26] However, the somatic preoccupations were also part of a gender discourse that valued separate spheres not just for men and women in general, but also for men and women as parents.

The English distinction between witchcraft and magic functioned similarly to the mother/father divide. James I's *Daemonologie*, for example, is divided into three books, the first of which is devoted to "The description of Magie," the second to "The description of Sorcerie and Witchcraft."[27] Whereas the language of alchemy, for example, was explicitly paternal,[28] most accused witches were female, and their

25. See Susan Cahn, *Industry of Devotion: The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). On the importance of paternal education, see Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, esp. 67-69. On male authorities' reluctance to have women attend to children's non-bodily needs, see Valerie Fildes, ed., *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England* (London: Routledge, 1990).

26. The seventeenth-century tract is Jacques Guillemeau's *Childe-birth, or, The Happy Deliverie of Women and The Nursing of Children* (London, 1612). Cited in Naomi J. Miller, "Mothering Others: Caregiving as Spectrum and Spectacle in the Early Modern Period," in *Maternal Measures*, 1-19, 5-6. Jean-Louis Flandrin, in *Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), has estimated that in early modern France, sending babies to a rural wet-nurse doubled already high urban infant death rates (264). Robert Woods, citing Valerie Fildes' *Breasts, Bottles and Babies: A History of Infant Feeding* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986), suggests that English infant mortality rates were lower specifically because fewer English mothers sent their babies out to nurse. See Woods, "Urban-Rural Mortality Differentials: An Unresolved Debate," *Population and Development Review* 29, no. 1 (2003): 29-46, 34.

27. James VI, *Daemonologie*, 1, 27.

28. In alchemical language and visual images, the golden product of alchemy was figured as a son; the parent compound, as a father. See, for example, Nicholas Flamel, *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall figures . . . Together with The secret Booke of ARTEPHIUS* [London, 1624], ed. Laurinda Dixon (New York: Garland, 1994).

supernatural powers were rooted in bodily, domestic acts. They made butter impossible to churn, babies fall ill, milk go sour (the emphasis on trouble with milk products is another intersection of witchcraft and the maternal).[29] *Macbeth*'s witches might suggest cooks or washerwomen, boiling things in their supernatural yet homely cauldron. But the magician or magus or sorcerer, all terms for males, was different. Frequently perceived as learned and associated with Court, the magician was not, unlike witches, thought to have gained power from intercourse with the devil or other figures. Contemporary pamphlets often represent his powers as art rather than as perversions of natural acts. And like Prospero, the magus eschewed the body-oriented cauldron for the mind-oriented book. The "secret studies" Prospero undertakes in Milan, he tells us, took the form of "liberal arts" (1.2.77, 73); they seems as text-based and theoretical as his verbal paternity of Miranda. "Burn but his books," Caliban urges Prospero's would-be murderers, "without them / He's but a sot" (3.2.90, 87-88).

As the material above suggests, the discursive divisions between witches and magicians, mothers and fathers, are structured in large part by another Western division in thought, that between body and mind. Apart from the influence of Galen and the humoral theory of personality, whose influence was strong in the sixteenth century and had waned somewhat by the seventeenth, this conceptual split was even more pervasive in Shakespeare's time than it is now.[30] Medieval and Renaissance students of neurology

29. See Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), esp. 91-118, for an overview of the domesticity of the witch.

30. On the Paracelsian challenge to Galenic theory, see Nancy Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

considered thinking such a rarefied process that not even brain tissue could have anything to do with it. Instead, cognition was supposed to take place somewhere within the cerebral cavities, the absence of flesh allowing mental activity.[31] The hierarchy of the mind-body split needs little reiteration here—one component of the pair was superior. So perhaps it should be expected that Sycorax and mother's son Caliban are the most embodied of *The Tempest*'s characters; they are hardly mentioned without reference to their physicality, their coloring and precise shape. And the play is an anorexic romance. With the exception of Gonzalo, every character who takes in bodily nourishment—or attempts to do so, or remembers having done so—is a usurper. Or treasonous. Or would-be-rapist "[h]ag-seed" (1.2.364). As Adelman reminds us in a justly celebrated essay on *Coriolanus*, the need to eat is the quintessential symbol of bodily frailty, of reliance on

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1990). On the response of one influential early modern medical writer to Galen, a response that deemphasizes Galen's respect for the materiality of the body, see "Subjectified Parts and Supervenient Selves: Rewriting Galenism in Crooke's *Microcosmographia*," in Eve Keller, *Generating Bodies and Gendered Selves: The Rhetoric of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 47-70. A concise but systematic treatment of Renaissance ideas on soul and body is Emily Michael's "Renaissance Theories of Body, Soul, and Mind" in *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, ed. John P. Wright and Paul Potter (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 147-172). In an essay that cites Jonson's patron Sir Kenelm Digby, a champion of the immortality of the incorporeal soul (157, 170), Michael writes that "[t]the human soul, or psyche, from ancient times to the early modern period played a double role in relation to the body. First, it was believed to be integrally linked to the human body as the locus or cause of its vital and cognitive activities; and second, it was believed to be the vehicle, as separable from the human body, of personal immortality. . . . The story of the human soul's career during the Renaissance is that of the progress from general agreement on the harmony of these two roles to a common preoccupation with their reputed conflict" (147). The mind-body split is not quite eradicated, of course—the New Millennium edition of *Roget's Thesaurus* lists "body" as an antonym for "brain."

31. See Walter N. Pagel, "Medieval and Renaissance Contributions to Knowledge of the Brain and Its Functions," in *The History and Philosophy of the Brain and Its Functions*, ed. F. N. L. Poynter (Springfield, Ill: Charles C. Thomas, 1958), 95-114.

the world outside—and first, on the mother.[32] Prospero and the paternally focused Miranda and Ferdinand never consume. On the contrary, Ferdinand imagines with horror a "flesh-fly blow[ing his] mouth" (3.1.63). Too, Ariel's airiness, his "shape invisible" (4.1.185), seems second only to his obedience as a marker of his superiority to earthy mother's son Caliban, whose most overt displays of docility are bodily and usually oral: he promises to lick feet and shoes (3.2.22, 4.1.218). Prospero's seeming doubt about his physical connection to Miranda, then—"[Thy mother] said thou wast my daughter"—is perhaps as much boast as accusation or disavowal (1.2.57). As chapter 4 notes, Freud went so far as to say that precisely because of its invisible, speculative nature, paternity symbolizes the triumph of "intellectuality over sensuality—that is, an advance in civilisation."[33] A more ambiguous and generalized situation is claimed by Carol Mossman: a preexisting "epistemological schism . . . gives the mother the body, thereby allowing the father to transcend it."[34] *The Tempest* is silent on the precise origins of paternal transcendence of the body, but its bilious view of oral consumption suggests that the mind-body split informs its tendency to divide mothers and fathers, witches and magicians, into separate spheres.

32. Janet Adelman, "'Anger's my meat': Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*," 323-337 in *Shakespeare: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1945-2000*, ed. Russ McDonald (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), esp. 325.

33. Sigmund Freud, "Moses and Monotheism" (1939), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, vol. 23, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth and the Institute for Psychoanalysis, 1964), 113-14.

34. Carol Mossman, "DNA and the Stakes in Embodying Paternity," in *Paternity and Fatherhood: Myths and Realities*, ed. Lieve Spaas and Trista Selous (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 40-48, 47.

At this point the chapter will cover some familiar but necessary territory: Prospero's dubious spiritual status and his links to the witch he displaces. Early modern examinations of magic and magicians are often careful to separate different types, labeling good magic "natural magic" and bad magic "demonic magic," Barbara Howard Traister shows. At least in theory, these two sorts of magic had a "single incontrovertible difference—demonic magic was performed with the aid of spirits; natural magic was not."[35] Only with the advent of Neoplatonism did natural magic begin to include theurgic magic, by which a magician might call on benevolent spirits, or daemons. So is Ariel daemonic or demonic? The name means "lion of God." It also designates an evil angel, and this duality, among other things, throws Prospero's moral status into question.[36] Contemporary witchcraft texts even cast a shadow on Prospero's membership in the relatively harmless category of magus. According to the *Daemonologie*, magicians begin to explore the supernatural out of curiosity; witches, however, are motivated by revenge and greed. Magicians perform "white magic" that harms no one but perhaps themselves; witches turn humans into animals, wound, maim, taunt people with false apparitions, and, notably, cause tempests. As Nancy Hayes puts it, the "ever-present charge of weather-making ratchets up the offense from a domestic to a cosmic level."[37] Shakespeare had

35. Barbara Howard Traister, *Heavenly Necromancers: The Magician in Renaissance Drama* (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1984), 5.

36. For a brief discussion of Ariel's duality, see Orgel, ed., *The Tempest*, 111, note 188.1. Keith Thomas notes that the Anglican Church was generally antagonistic to any kind of conjuration, demonic or daemonic, in *Religion and the Decline of Magic*: *Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 268.

37. See Nancy Hayes, "Negativizing Nurture and Demonizing Domesticity: The Witch Construct in Early Modern Germany," in Miller and Yavneh, *Maternal Measures*, 179-200, 196. Hayes argues that witches' supposed storm-raising powers reflected early modern people's fear of the non-nurturing mother.

demonstrated his willingness to represent witches as causing dangerous sea storms in *Macbeth*; one of the three Witches promises of a shipmaster that "[t]hough his bark cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tost" (1.3.25). Prospero also threatens Caliban with "cramps," "side-stitches / That shall pen [his] breath up," and fiercely stinging pinches (1.2.325-29), and he warns that he will stick Ariel in the "entrails" of a tree, just as Sycorax had (295). Essentially, Prospero has the external hallmarks of a magician, but his activities more closely resemble those of a witch. This identification is striking in a play performed at court for a king who wanted all witches executed (James states that they "ought to be put to death according to the Law of god, the civill and imperial law, and municipall law of all Christian nations," preferably in as unpleasant a manner as possible).[38] It is also surprisingly transgendered.

Prospero is usually referred to by himself and others as a magician. Caliban is the one exception, calling his master a "sorcerer" and repeating the accusation when Ariel denies it: "I say by sorcery he got this isle" (3.2.41, 51). If Prospero's magical identity is uncertain, though, Sycorax is undeniably a witch. Shakespeare identifies her with Circe not only in that she is a sorceress who rules an island, but also in her name, which rearranges "Coraxi." (Circe, Frank Kermode noted, is associated with the Coraxi tribe.[39]) Prospero frequently distinguishes between himself and Sycorax. He, and to some extent Miranda, talk about his powers in terms of clean, comparatively uncontroversial "art" ten

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"Weather witches" were primarily a Continental phenomenon, but Purkiss cites examples of British weather-witch fears reported by Thomas Nashe and C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witch in History*, 227n26.

38. James VI, *Daemonologie*, 64.

39. See Frank Kermode, ed., *The Arden Tempest* (London: Methuen, 1961), 26.

times, while Sycorax, in his account, is unclean, a woman who has mated with the devil, a "foul witch" (1.2.258).[40] But the two have notable likenesses. Banished because of their interest in supernatural powers, they both come to the island with a child, one born and one not. Too, Prospero, is like Circe, perhaps more than Sycorax is.[41] It is he, not Sycorax, whose island is visited by a ship of men on a long voyage, and he turns spirits into animals—hounds instead of swine. Having the men hunted by the hounds, he dehumanizes them as well. *The Odyssey*'s Circe episode also emerges in the dissent within *The Tempest*'s shipwrecked group—Sebastian and Antonio raise their swords to kill Alonso just as Odysseus raises his to kill Eurylochos. In a final link, Circe's honey, barley, and wine turn Odysseus's men into swine, while the men in *The Tempest* start toward the false banquet only to be bewitched by Prospero's agent. Prospero may seem a kinder, gentler Circe. He arranges the banquet, but does not lead the men to doom with bewitched food; he turns people into animals metaphorically rather than literally; he arranges supernatural mishaps by proxy instead of directly, with many of his most physcially aggressive acts displaced onto Ariel. Both Prospero and Circe, though, operate on sensory perception. They render empirical knowledge suspect. More to the point here,

40. In *Stage-Wrights: Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and the Making of Theatrical Value* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), Paul Yachnin treats "art" and specifically theatrical art as a devalued and feminized early modern category (see ch. 1 in particular). However, he compares artistic production to the political arena rather than to bodily endeavors; "art" may be relatively feminine in the one context and relatively masculine in the other.

41. For a fuller discussion of Prospero's and Sycorax's similarities, see Margreta de Grazia, "*The Tempest*: Gratuitous Movement or Action Without Kibes," *Shakespeare Studies* 14 (1981): 249-265. For an overview of the links between Prospero, Sycorax, Circe, and Medea, see Orgel, ed., Introduction, 19n1. Purkiss links Circe and Medea in their "disruption of primogeniture," *Witch in History*, 258.

the deceptive, dangerous food problematizes the act of feeding, acting as what Willis would call the "malevolent nurture" sometimes associated with maternal care.[42]

Readers often identify Medea, another witch-mother, with Sycorax. But Prospero, not Sycorax, gives a speech in Act 5 just slightly altered from one of Medea's in the *Metamorphoses*. Lines 42-50 come almost directly from Ovid. But they are contextually reversed: Medea invents a spell to make an old man regain his youth; Prospero gives up his vigor.

> I have bedimmed
> The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds
> And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
> Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder
> Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
> With his own bolt; the strong-based promontory
> Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
> The pine and cedar. Graves at my command
> Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let 'em forth
> By my so potent art. But this rough magic
> I here abjure . . . .
>
> (5.1.41-51)

42. See Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*. David Sundelson, in *Shakespeare's Restorations of the Father* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 111, also describes Prospero's feeding commands as maternal.

Anthony Harris points out that both Middleton's *The Witch* and Jonson's *The Masque of Queenes* contain parallel passages whose speakers are "undoubtedly witches, practitioners of 'black' magic."[43] These practitioners are female. Prospero's "potent" art notwithstanding, the cultural matrix of his speech is feminine in a way clear not only to twenty-first-century scholars, but probably to many contemporary theatergoers as well. Prospero's embeddedness in Renaissance bad-witch references problematizes his status as a male magus. Conversely, his identity as protagonist softens the usual early modern critique of witchcraft. The sorcery in *The Tempest* often seems justifiable. Instead of involving the flagrant theft of harmless penises, it helps keeps potential rapist Caliban at bay. Instead of threatening the royal ship with storms, as James feared it had when he and Queen Anne were nearly shipwrecked en route from Denmark to Scotland in 1589, it restores political order.

The absence of Miranda's mother and the defeat and death of Sycorax initially seem both an occlusion of maternity and a blow to witchcraft. Caliban's claim on the island is futile: "This island's mine by Sycorax my mother, / Which thou tak'st from me" (1.2.331-32). Or "[w]hich" may refer to Sycorax ("witch") rather than to the island; Shakespeare uses the relative pronouns "which" and "who" interchangeably. The accusation is one of theft in either case. But in Prospero's triumph over the witch, he becomes her. Parent-figure to Caliban, inheritor of Ariel, and supernatural ruler of the island, Prospero functions not as Sycorax's opposite but as her analogue. More

43. Anthony Harris, *Night's Black Agents* (Totowa: University of Manchester Press, 1980), 134.

surprisingly, his language picks up traces of the motherhood that doesn't exist on the island physically. Vaughan and Vaughan note that *The Tempest* features "frequent use of an extra unaccented syllable at the end of lines"—in other words, a feminine ending.[44] Donald Foster follows previous scholars in observing Shakespeare's dramatically increased use of this extrametrical syllable toward the end of his career; *The Tempest* is a high-water mark at thirty-five per cent.[45] (Sample line endings in the play: "lady," "created," "magic," "power," "father," "daughter," "mother.") So the meter itself expresses gender—the term "feminine ending" was already in use a few years before *The Tempest*, when Samuel Daniel discussed it in his *Defence of Rhyme*. [46] And it expresses the particular gender underrepresented in the play. But beyond gender in general, throughout 1.2 Prospero draws on a rhetoric of maternity, initially for his usurping brother Antonio and eventually for himself too.

First Prospero linguistically feminizes Antonio through the classical trope of the ivy and the tree: "he was / The ivy which had hid my princely trunk / And sucked my verdure" (1.2.86-87). For David Sundelson, this passage figures Antonio as a child, and Prospero, an androgynous suffering parent, a masculine "princely trunk" nursing the ivy.[47] Posthumus likewise imagines himself a male tree in *Cymbeline*, probably

44. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, eds., *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare (London: Arden, 1999), Introduction, 22.

45. Foster, Donald. *Elegy by W. S.: A Study in Attribution* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), 246 n. 7. Though Foster's conclusions are often highly debatable, his feminine ending count is less so.

46. See the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s. v. "feminine," 6b.

47. Sundelson, *Shakespeare's Restorations*, 106.

contemporaneous with *The Tempest*: "Hang there like fruit, my soul / Till the tree die!"[48] The ivy's gender is also worth noting. Richard Wheeler observes that Shakespeare's earlier uses of the vine-tree topos, in *A Comedy of Errors* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, feature a male tree and female vine.[49] Classical poets, including Catullus, usually gender the pair the same way.[50] Though T. W. Baldwin is cagey on the topic of Shakespeare's familiarity with Catullus, *The Tempest* seems to have been written with Catullus 62 ("*Vesper adest*") in mind; the poem's image of a bereft (*vidua*) vine, touching its highest shoot to its root as it ages (*contingit summum radice flagellum . . . dum . . . senescit*), reappears twice in the play, transmuted into human form.[51] The solitary

48. *Cymbeline*, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997), 5.5.266-67.

49. Richard Wheeler, "Fantasy and History in *The Tempest*," in *The Tempest: Theory in Practice*, ed. Nigel Wood (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), 127-164.

50. For a systematic treatment of the trope, see Peter Demetz, "The Elm and the Vine: Notes toward the History of a Marriage Topos," *PMLA* 73, no. 5, Part 1 (1958): 521-532. Nonclassical versions Demetz cites include Psalm 128, also with a female vine: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house" (Pss. 128:3 [Geneva]), and *Paradise Lost*: "they led the Vine / To wed her Elm; she spous'd about him twines / Her marriageable arms, and with her brings / Her dow'r th' adopted Clusters, to adorn / His barren leaves." See *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1957), 5.215-219.

51. T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakspere's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, vol. 2 (1944; Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 551-53, http://durer.press.uiuc.edu/baldwin/index.html. Baldwin cites Theobald's suggestion of Catullus 62 as a source for *The Tempest* 3.1.83-86, but does not mention *The Tempest*'s other echoes of 62. Catullus 62: As an unwed vine that grows in a bare field never raises itself up, never brings out a ripe grape, but bending down its fragile body with its leaning weight, now touches its root with its highest shoot, no farmers, no young bullocks tend this one. But if by chance the same vine is yoked to a husband elm, many farmers, many young bullocks, tend it. So a maiden, as long as she remains untouched, so long does she age untended. When at the right time she finds a fitting union, she is more dear to her husband and less noxious to her parent [my translation]. The Latin:

Ut vidua in nudo vitis quae nascitur arvo
numquam se extollit, numquam mitem educat uvam,
sed tenerum prono deflectens pondere corpus
iam iam contingit summum radice flagellum;
hanc nulli agricolae, nulli coluere iuvenci:
at si forte eadem est ulmo coniuncta marito,
multi illam agricolae, multi coluere iuvenci:
sic virgo, dum intacta manet, dum inculta senescit;

Sycorax "with age and envy / Was grown into a hoop" (258-59), and Prospero, deliberately slowing Miranda and Ferdinand's courtship, threatens to "manacle [Ferdinand's] neck and feet together" (462). The hoop figure is one of an isolated self-joining, a forced solitude imagined as communion, as applicable to Prospero as to others. But more to the purpose here, for Catullus the vine is female (*virgo . . . intacta*); the better choice is to be joined to the husband elm tree (*ulmo coniuncta marito*). Shakespeare's identification of Antonio as the clinging vine is a startling regendering that introduces Antonio's, rather than merely Prospero's, linguistic maternity. Of his brother's deceit, Prospero tells Miranda, "my trust, / Like a good *parent*, did *beget* of him / A falsehood" (94-95, my italics). Sundelson comments that even Prospero's expulsion from Milan sounds like childbirth: Antonio opens "the gates" to push out "[m]e and thy crying self" (130, 131-32).[52] Prospero's masculine "fathering" of Antonio's ambition (94) results in his own infantilized exile, and act 5's references to destroyed oak, pine, and cedar recall the masculine and vulnerable "princely trunk" (5.1.45, 48). Conversely, Antonio's increasing feminization corresponds to an increase in his power.

Once the expulsion has taken place Prospero no longer describes his political enemies in the language of maternity. Alone on the sea with Miranda, Prospero *himself* becomes a sort of mother. Early modern drama and other texts continually represent women as having leaky, permeable bodies, as Gail Kern Paster has shown, and in this

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cum par conubium maturo tempore adepta est,
cara viro magis et minus est invisa parenti.
(Catullus *Carmina* 62, in *Catullus: A Critical Edition*, ed. D. S. F. Thomson [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978] , 130-34, ll. 49-58)

52. Sundelson, *Shakespeare's Restorations*, 106.

scene, Orgel notes, Prospero reports his leaky tears in a passage strikingly suggestive of pregnancy.[53] He tells Miranda, "I ha[d] decked the sea with drops full salt, / Under my burden groaned; which raised in me / An undergoing *stomach*, to *bear* up / Against what should ensue" (1.2.155-58, my italics). The salty drops evoke water breaking, and even the seemingly gender-neutral "groaned," as the *OED* indicates, suggests the labor of childbirth, a "groaning." (The word also takes this sense in *Hamlet*.)[54] Prospero initially mothers Caliban as well, caressing and feeding him as an early modern mother (or a nurse, always female) would an infant, even as he tutors Caliban in the limiting art of naming:

> Thou strok'dst me and made much of me, wouldst give me
> Water with berries in't, and teach me how
> To name the bigger light and how the less,
> That burn by day and night; and then I lov'd thee . . .
>
> (1.2.332-36)[55]

But *The Tempest* is to no small degree about the limitations of education, and Caliban's awareness of opposition and hierarchy (the moon is "less," with its connotations of inferiority, not just the neutral "smaller") apparently outlasts the names, which he speaks *about* rather than speaks. The bodily memories, too, last longer. In one particularly

53. Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Stephen Orgel, "Prospero's Wife," in *Rewriting the Renaissance*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 54.

54. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "groaning." William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: Norton, 1997), 3.2.229.

55. Cf. Perry, esp. 116-17, on Jacobean references to monarchical bounty.

somatic reference, Prospero reminds Caliban, "I . . . lodg'd thee / In mine own cell" (345-7). For Jacobeans "cell" did not have associations with imprisonment, but it did with the body.[56] Perhaps Prospero's attempts to mother Caliban are unsuccessful because the "monster," unlike Miranda, remembers his own mother quite well. In the course of a short but nasty conversation with Prospero, he mentions Sycorax four times. Even Caliban's memory of Prospero's astronomy lesson at 333-34 recalls Sycorax and her lunar tie: "His mother . . . / . . . could control the moon" (5.1.272-73).

Prospero's verbal assumption of maternity through the already-born Miranda occurs at a convenient time, when the pair must leave Milan, the memory of Miranda's biological mother, and also all other substitutes, the "four or five women once that tended" the daughter (1.2.47). The biological mother, part of the "dark backward and abyss of time" (50), is apparently not among the people Miranda remembers, and her query—"Sir, are you not my father?"—points to something other than a mere question of genealogical origin (55). The phrasing, read literally, can also question Prospero's sex. In the same scene, the inexperienced yet skeptical Miranda questions the ordinary human maleness of Ferdinand, too:

> What is't?—a spirit?
>
> Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,
>
> It carries a brave form. But 'tis a spirit.[57]

56. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "cell."

57. The *OED* lists a seventeenth-century definition for "spirit" that makes the passage seem a joke at Ferdinand's expense: "One who kidnaps; an abductor." The sample sentence, from 1645, indicates that spirits were abductors of children in particular. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "spirit."

(1.2.410-412)

Only after her father assures her of Ferdinand's humanity and gender does Miranda use a masculine pronoun, albeit a qualified one: "I might call him / A *thing* divine" (418-419, my italics).

Prospero never actually answers Miranda's question by acknowledging his *father*hood; instead, he tells Miranda that it seems likely she is his daughter. These lines are generally read simply to indicate suspicion of female fidelity. But Prospero seems quite sure of Miranda's descent eleven lines later, when he speaks to her of "[m]y brother and thy uncle, call'd Antonio" (1.2.66). Unless we make the uncalled-for conjecture that an anonymous third Milanese brother fathered Miranda, line 66 suggests that Prospero does not doubt that Miranda is his daughter. The word "father," then, is more important in terms of gender than of parenthood. In any event, fatherhood is of questionable value on the island. Caliban, "got by the devil himself" (1.2.319), reaps few benefits from his progenitor. Masculinity in general is a tricky proposition, just as it turns out to be in *Macbeth*. The earlier witch play first appears to emphasize female uncanniness and amorality, both in the Witches' sexualized malfeasance and in Lady Macbeth's rapid verbal segué from maternal love ("I have given suck, and know / How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me") to infanticide (she would have "dash'd the brains out" [1.7.54-55, 59]). But the Witches' "skinny lips" and "beards" indicate masculinity, as Macbeth himself says, even more than they do age (1.3.45-47). Lady Macbeth's plea "unsex me here, / And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full / Of direst cruelty"

likewise links masculinity, not femininity, with evil (1.5.41-43). "[M]ake thick my blood," she continues. "Stop up th'access and passage to remorse; / That no compunctious visitings of Nature / Shake my fell purpose" (43-46). She, and the play, imagine coldness as bodily defeminization, in this case amenorrhea.[58] *The Tempest* represents masculinity as a source of frailty. When first encountering Ferdinand, Prospero threatens metaphorical emasculation: "I can here disarm thee with this stick / And make thy weapon drop" (2.1.472-73). And when Antonio, Alonso, and Sebastian draw their weapons at Ariel's appearance, for example, the spirit informs them, "Your swords are now too massy for your strengths / And will not be uplifted" (3.3.67-68). This image of ineffective hypermasculinity, appropriately described in passive voice, sets off Antonio's former role as the politically powerful "mother" in Milan, suggesting that rematernalization is in order for the man who would be duke. Or perhaps king: Sebastian pries out Antonio's further ambitions with the following parturitional remark: "The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim / A matter from thee, and a birth, indeed, / Which throes thee much to yield" (2.1.227-29)

When Prospero complains of Antonio ("Mark his condition and th'event, then tell me / If this might be a brother"), Miranda, perhaps naïve in her assumption that her father's injunction to "tell" is more than rhetorical, remarks, "I should sin / To think but nobly of my grandmother. / Good wombs have borne bad sons" (1.2.117-20). Here Shakespeare jolts us back to the land of literal wombs instead of metaphorical ones, and

58. See Jenijoy La Belle, "'A Strange Infirmity': Lady Macbeth's Amenorrhea," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (Autumn 1980), 381-86.

Miranda's phrasing underscores both the suspicion with which early moderns viewed mothers and the extent to which maternity was seen as somatic: *wombs* rather than *women* bear sons. Or, wombs and women are the same thing. (Thomas Raynald's *The Birth of Mankinde,* an obstetrical translation which went through at least eight editions between 1540 and 1598, is explicit on this topic: "the Matrix, the Mother, and the Wombe, doe signifie but one thinge.")[59] "Borne" may also carry the sense of "suffered," with Miranda's response emphasizing her grandmother's travails at the hands of male offspring over her possible betrayal of a male spouse. But either reading of the exchange heightens an impression that there *is* something troubling about Antonio's presence in the family, something inadequately explained.

Miranda appears to use "nobly" in a general sense. However, in the context of a discussion of family and fitness to rule, the word suggests heritable power and status. Nobility derives from parents. Presumably, Prospero's and Miranda's is no exception. Miranda, if she is Prospero's daughter, and he his father's child, cannot help but think "nobly." And if qualities are heritable—as the doctrine of blood nobility that the play reminds us of indicates—then the assertion that "good wombs have borne bad sons" implies the presence of a corrupting father. Alternatively, just as Prospero's paradoxically falsehood-begetting "good parent" points to a breakdown in parent-child transmission, the existence of a good mother who produces bad sons problematizes the notion of blood heritability. In both cases, the early modern fantasy of the dangerous mother, the figure

59. See Thomas Raynalde, *The birth of mankynde otherwyse named the womans booke* (London: Richard Jugge, 1565) Early English Books Online Bodleian copy, STC / 1558:06 fol. 7 verso, image 22 (accessed April 1, 2006).

whose very maternity is enough to endanger a child, gives way to an acknowledgment of multiple threats, multiple locations of trouble—even, possibly, the father.

Magical thinking is the province of the disadvantaged—children, the desperate, the uneducated, the impoverished, and in the case of *The Tempest*, the father. In its tenuous claims, paternity *requires* a sort of magical or at any rate faith-based thinking. But the language and motif of concealment and enclosure that permeates the play—Prospero's "closeness" in his "secret studies" (1.2.90, 77), the ship "hid" in the "deep nook" (229, 227), Ariel's imprisonment (277-78), Ferdinand "i'th'ooze . . . bedded" (3.3.100), Alonso "mudded" (3.3.102), and the buried staff (5.1.54-55), to name just a few—underscore a similarity between Prospero's work and the labors of pregnancy and motherhood. Intellectual magic or sordid witchcraft, Prospero's labor is merely semi-visible, isolated, of only theoretical and long-term value. If performance is public enactment, it is work that can rarely be adequately performed. So perhaps there should be little surprise that Prospero's ending reminiscence of Sycorax betrays what sounds like respect, if not nostalgia: "His mother was a witch, and one so strong / That could control the moon, make flows and ebbs, / And deal in her command without her power" (5.1.272-74). Prospero has already created a similar sea disturbance, of course, one marked by Ferdinand's "eyes, never since at *ebb*" (1.2.436, my italics), so in complimenting Sycorax, he compliments himself. Her son Caliban, too, receives his due: "This thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" (278-79). The passage is variously read as a European admission of transatlantic imperialist guilt, a British concession of colonialist mistakes in

Ireland, and a statement of personal moral failing. I add one more valence: Prospero openly acknowledges the somatic, the mysterious (the "dark thing") in paternity as well as the mysterious womb of maternity, the "dark backward and abyss of time" where the memory of Miranda's mother lies (1.2.50). Adelman argues that *The Tempest* fills a "need for a bodiless father immune to the female," but the Epilogue backs away from any grab at patriarchal power.[60] It seeks the sort of physical nurturance that tracts on early modern parenting defined as the realm of the mother ("But release me from my bands / With the help of your good hands. / Gentle breath of yours my sails / Must fill") and relinquishes, even as it mourns, conventionally masculine verbal and artistic production: "Now I want / . . . *art* to enchant" (5.1.327-30, 331-32, my italics). The sails filled with air recall an earlier Shakespearean image of motherhood, Titania's memory of her changeling boy's mother in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*:

> . . . we have laughed to see the sails conceive
> And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind,
> Which she with pretty and with swimming gait
> Following, her womb then rich with my young squire,
> Would imitate, and sail upon the land.
>
> (2.1.128-32)[61]

In this passage the wind-father is wanton, the mother and her womb benign.

60. Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 193.

61. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: Norton, 1997), 2.1.128-132.

Prospero calls Caliban a "misshapen knave" in the acknowledgment speech I discuss above (5.1.268). "Shape," a touchstone for *The Tempest*'s musings on how identity is made, sometimes simply refers to physical form. At other points the word also suggests innate characteristics; Prospero says that save the "hag-born" Caliban, before his and Miranda's arrival the island was "not honoured with / A human shape" (1.2.283-84). But the play also undercuts this attribution of Caliban's distastefulness to his physical origins in Sycorax: "shape" is as often as not something that *Prospero* assigns to other beings. "Go take this [nymph-like] shape," he commands Ariel, later demanding, "[t]hy shape invisible retain" (3.1.303, 3.3.37). Alonso sees "[s]uch shapes," under Prospero's control, bringing in the disappearing banquet (4.1.185). Given Prospero and Miranda's earlier education of Caliban, "misshapen knave" hints not so much at his inherent moral malformation as it does their active contribution to it, their *misshaping* of him. This is a failure of paternally derived mind as well as maternally derived body. That his teachers have indeed taught him "how to curse" (1.2.363), as he says, becomes clear when Prospero answers this indictment with supernatural threats: "I'll rack thee with old cramps, / Fill all thy bones with achës, make thee roar, / That beasts shall tremble at thy din" (1.2.368-370). His enemies' unpleasant, unshapely aging is one of Prospero's hobbyhorses, especially with Caliban: "as with age his body uglier grows, / So his mind cankers" (4.1.191-92), he says. (The description of Caliban's mental decline with a somatic term underscores Prospero's subordination of Caliban's mind to his body, even while the passage on the whole parallels bodily and mental decay.) Stephano, Trinculo,

and Caliban are likewise on the business end of a command to "shorten up their sinews / With agèd cramps" (4.1.260-61). The root of Prospero's concern with others' aging is clear from his request at 4.1.159: "Bear with my weakness, my old brain is troubled." Even as he anticipates his political revival, he thinks of his mortality—"[e]very third thought shall be my grave" (5.1.311). The menace of "old cramps" and arthritic-sounding pain at 1.2.368, then, conflates Caliban with "old" Prospero. It makes the threat of physical pain Prospero's self-punishment for Caliban's misshapenness even as Prospero fantasizes *un*teaching Caliban, erasing his human language ("mak[ing him] roar").[62] In short, the threat of physical vulnerability—aging, illness, misshapenness, death—underlies *The Tempest*'s hostility to what it represents as the feminized body, but the play cannot maintain faith in what it sets up as opposition to that body, the shaping masculine mind.

The Tempest's rehabilitation of the physical, which implies a rehabilitation of the maternal, extends beyond Prospero. "Shape," in its simplest physical sense, plays a role in Miranda's attraction to Ferdinand: "I would not wish / Any companion in the world but you; / Nor can imagination form a shape / Besides yourself to like of" (3.1.54-57). Though heavily manipulated by Prospero, the courtship is another indicator of bodily power over the mind, and benign power at that. Too, Ferdinand's log-carrying legitimates the despised physical labor ("painful" and "wooden slavery," he calls it) previously assigned to Caliban (3.1.1, 62). The "baseness" of the work turns into an occasion for

62. Given the role of Naples in the play, the aching bones also suggest the "Neapolitan bone-ache," generally thought to refer to syphilis or another sexually transmitted disease. See its use in 2.3.18.

impressing Miranda with chivalry: "for your sake / Am I this patient log-man" (12, 66-67). Readers sometimes identify the logs as sexual, with Prospero making Ferdinand bear their hyperphallic weight to tame his mirandaphilia into an acceptably marital version. But the wood is earlier identified as firewood (1.2.311); carrying it is promethean, not priapic. The degrading task is also heroic, the first step toward a complex material culture. The civilizing process in the play, then, is not exactly the triumph of the mind over the body. Rather, the bringing of firewood figures the shaping of the natural world *through* the body. Prospero's fire, mediated by Ariel, "flame[s] amazement" with "fire and cracks / Of sulphurous roaring" on the visitors' ship (1.2.198, 203-04). But it never becomes clear whether this fire, created by ambiguous mental and magical power, is real or illusory. In contrast, even Prospero admits that the flame Caliban generates *physically* is crucial: "We cannot miss him; he does make our fire" (312).

Ferdinand and the embodied Caliban are also subtly linked by Prospero's use of "canker," which appears nowhere else in the play, to describe their flaws. In general, the somatization first tainted by its association with Caliban and Sycorax eventually gains status by its link to paternal heir Ferdinand (1.2.416, 4.1.192). And Ferdinand's "labour" (3.1.1, 7, 14), as he calls it three times in a single speech (the word suggested childbirth for early moderns too, and Shakespeare uses it in this sense elsewhere), mirrors Prospero's childbirth rhetoric of "groan[ing]," "bear[ing]," and "stomach") and his

promise to "deliver all" (1.2.155-58, 5.1.313).[63] This Prometheus gives an oddly parturitional speech. The pervasive language of pregnancy, migrating from Antonio to Prospero to Ferdinand, ties the rehabilitation of the body to the gendered forms of parenting that *The Tempest* both reiterates and denies.

Lawrence Danson writes that while father-daughter relationships in Shakespeare's last plays are "gloriously sentimentalised," father-son ties bear the marks of anxiety and aggression.[64] Prospero, however, ultimately trades the company of Miranda (and Ariel) for Caliban, and the Alonso-Ferdinand bond is strained only by the illusion of death. But in a departure from the notion of fatherhood as disembodied, Ariel's sung elegy for Alonso, along with Ferdinand's antiphony, emphasizes both filial affection and the materiality of filiation:

> Full fathom five thy father lies,
>
> Of his bones are coral made;
>
> Those are pearls that were his eyes;
>
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
>
> But doth suffer a sea-change
>
> Into something rich and strange.
>
> Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.

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63. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "labour." The *Antony and Cleopatra* reference: "With news the time's in labor, and throws forth / Each minute some," in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 3.7.82-83.

64. Lawrence Danson, "Shakespeare and the Misrecognition of Fathers and Sons," in *Paternity and Fatherhood*, 236-245, 238. Adelman, in *Suffocating Mothers*, makes a similar point. Both see the late plays as paternal rather than filial wish-fulfillment.

(*Burden*) Ding dong.

Hark, now I hear them, ding dong bell.

(1.2.397-405)

The "pearls that were his eyes" recall both *Merchant*'s blind Old Gobbo and *Lear*'s blinded Gloucester, not to mention *The Waste Land*.[65] For the earlier plays, as for Oedipus, the loss of eyes figures a pathological transmission between father and son. Readers following Freud's lead often interpret the damage as castration. But in *Merchant* and *Lear*, and *The Tempest* too, the missing eyes serve both to divide and unite fathers and sons in more complex ways. The sons guide and sometimes misguide the sightless fathers in the first two plays; the blindness provides a chance to display an inevitable generational shift in power. In *The Tempest*, Alonso's eyes are a legacy. When Ferdinand says he is the "best" Neapolitan (1.2.430) and Prospero questions the claim—"What wert thou if the King of Naples heard thee?" (432)—Ferdinand replies,

A single thing, as I am now, that wonders
To hear thee speak of Naples. He does hear me,
And that he does, I weep: myself am Naples,
Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld
The King my father wrecked.

(433-37)

65. The Eliot passage: "Here, said she, / Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor, / (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)." See Eliot, *The Waste Land: a Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, ed. Valerie Eliot (San Diego: Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 1.46-48.

Alonso's lost eyes (399) become Ferdinand's. While emphasizing ownership ("*mine* eyes"), Ferdinand mourns his father with them (436). Figuratively and physically, the eyes are an inheritance. They are at once the bodily trace of the father, identity in the broadest sense—"I's," aurally—and "rich" and "pearls," symbols of the wealth and status Alonso's death will bring to Ferdinand (402, 399).[66] Eyes in themselves, as somatic representations of mental perception, belie the distance of body from mind. Alonso's eyes are particularly indicative of a father's import, material and bodily as a mother's.

Ferdinand's willingness to play with language and joke about his having replaced his father in "[h]e does hear me" suggests an ambiguity in "the King my father wrecked" (1.2.434, 437). The lack of punctuation raises the possibility that "wrecked" is an active verb; father has wrecked son, the new king. The hinted accusation matches Sebastian's argument that Alonso is to blame for what they think is Ferdinand's drowning (2.1.121, 126-133). But as Ferdinand acknowledges, from the king's physical death he receives political life, becoming Naples. Here the *father's* body, and its accompanying mortality, betokens social growth, just as Ariel's description of Alonso's putative bodily decay involves a metamorphosis. Likewise the father's progress through the Shakespearean corpus, if measured back from Ariel's song to its predecessor in *Merchant*:

> Tell me where is fancy bred,
>
> Or in the heart, or in the head?

66. The pearls evoke chaste marital reproduction too, anticipating "the jewel in my dower" (3.1.54), Miranda's description of her "modesty" (53). And pearls are somewhat embryonic in their appearance and their underwater embedding in oysters; the resemblance suggests that Alonso as well as Prospero has a gestational function.

How begot, how nourishèd?

Reply, reply.

It is engend'red in the eye,

With gazing fed, and fancy dies

In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell.

I'll begin it—Ding, dong, bell.

(3.2.63-71)

In the reference to eyes and in other words—"lies," "ring," "knell," "ding dong bell"—Ariel's song echoes *Merchant*'s. Both are sung as a child comes into patrimony, or in Ferdinand's case, as he thinks he does. But the earlier play disembodies the paternal control Portia seeks to circumvent. The father is verbal, his material existence confined to the pages of a will. *The Tempest* renders him eyes and bone. *Merchant*'s song warns against relying on the senses; "gazing" leads to the crib death of affection. But the romance reassures about the decay of the physical. It also rejects the pretense that outward show is not relevant, that the somatic doesn't matter. The plays travel toward increased acceptance of the body, and the fathers of *Merchant*, dead or disgraced, reemerge as something rich and strange in *The Tempest*.

The association between the parental body and mortality, customarily focused on the mother, applies to the father in *The Tempest* as well. Alonso's illusory transformation into pearls and coral does not altogether mitigate Ferdinand's grief: "I am, in my

condition, / A prince, Miranda; I do think a king— / I would not so!—and would no more endure / This wooden slavery than to suffer / The flesh-fly blow my mouth" (3.1.59-63) The image of a parasite born out of its host's swollen body makes Ferdinand's death-linked inheritance from his father a travesty of pregnancy and parturition. And in Prospero's "[e]very third thought shall be my grave" (5.1.311), to which I return, the play ultimately links death to the mind too. Although in Freudian (and probably pre-Freudian) paradigms masculine authority and the search for social legitimacy rely on abstraction and transcendence of the body, as Mossman writes,[67] disembodiment and abstraction are precisely what separate Prospero from his dukedom in Milan. And his magic, seemingly cerebral, actually realizes a desire for the inseparability of body and mind. Prospero acts out the fantasy that others' bodies are directly responsive to one's mind; the characters' physical realities are on an easy continuum with his desires. In his expulsion from Milan, *The Tempest* denies the primacy of the intellectual. In the performance of his magic on the island, it denies that the cerebral, which forms the symbolic basis of paternity, is even a separate category.

The fluid boundaries of Prospero's mind solidify in act 5. His renunciation of magic at *The Tempest*'s end is the play's suspension of suspension of disbelief. But his return to the dukedom is also a concession to the body, including the maternal body, and to mortality. He abjures his intellectual form of magic in the language of murder and burial:

67. Mossman, "DNA and the Stakes," in *Paternity and Fatherhood* 42-43.

I'll break my staff,

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,

And deeper than did ever plummet sound

I'll drown my book.

(5.1.54-57)

The phallic staff and the masculine book are lost in earth and water, the two elements that early modern thought, especially Galenic medical tradition, associated with women.[68] One may argue, in the spirit of Adelman, that Prospero's rhetoric of motherhood and eventual embodiment is part of a takeover of maternal power, a misogynistic Shakespearean fantasy of male parthenogenesis. After all, the possibility that his language signifies an acceptance of the maternal appears undercut by the contretemps with Sycorax. But more than Prospero's maternally signifying words in 1.2, discussed on 201-05 above, reveals a reconciliation with the embodied discourse of motherhood by the romance's conclusion. Adelman's view—"paternal authority can be recovered only in [the mother's] absence, in the shrunken realm Prospero founds on her banishment"—overlooks the qualified and impermanent nature of that banishment.[69] Prospero revises Gonzalo's desire that a gender-neutral "nature" would self-replicate, "bring forth / Of it own kind all foison, all abundance / To feed my innocent people" in the masque (2.1.160-62), with female deities, Ceres joining Juno to offer "[e]arth's increase, foison plenty, /

68. See Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, esp. chap. 1, for a concise overview of the applications of Galenic theories of the body to Shakespeare.

69. Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, 37. Adelman writes that "the romances oscillate between them ["the mother and father lost in *Hamlet*"], broadly structured by a series of gendered either/or's: either maternal or paternal authority; either female deity or male, either nature or art" (194).

Barns and garners never empty" (4.1.110-111). And Sycorax, though dead, continues to permeate the play verbally. Prospero's anticipation of his own death at 5.1.311 links him to her and to Miranda's mother, and he eventually releases Miranda to nuptials with Ferdinand; by implication, to the world of sexual reproduction. Gonzalo reminds us that Miranda's impending marriage to the Neapolitan Ferdinand is not the only promise of maternity in the play. He wonders at the transformation of tragedy:

> Was Milan thrust from Milan that his issue
> Should become kings of Naples? O rejoice
> Beyond a common joy, and set it down
> With gold on lasting pillars! In one voyage
> Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,
> And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife
> Where he himself was lost, Prospero his dukedom
> In a poor isle, and all of us ourselves
> When no man was his own.
>
> (5.1.205-13)

In this context, the married daughter Claribel is another return of the maternal repressed rather than simply a Lévi-Straussian pawn in men's homosocial games. And Gonzalo's acknowledgment that "all of us [found] ourselves / When no man was his own," too, recalls something the play suggests throughout: no man *is* his own. By the play's end Prospero's relation to Sycorax, and to absent mothers in general, is less subsumption than

Freudian introjection: he adopts the traits of the lost object.[70] That is, in incorporating motherhood and Sycorax into his words and acts, he pays tribute. "Thy pulse / Beats as of flesh and blood," marvels Alonso when Prospero embraces him (5.1.113-14); Prospero's (maternal) somatization accompanies his humanization.

Writing on the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English Renaissance trope of parturition as a metaphor for creativity, Katharine Eisaman Maus reminds us that references to the womb as symbol for the imagination are "perfectly consistent with an ideology that strictly limits female sexual freedom, and excludes actual women from literary endeavors."[71] Maus is demonstrably correct about the poetic metaphor's limitations, though perhaps broader social change originates in part from metaphors that grow out of their original homes. One of Elizabeth I's best known if perhaps inaccurately transcribed public claims, "I have the heart and stomach of a king,"[72] is widely and reasonably regarded as an indicator of the political need to bow to masculinity in late sixteenth-century England. Even a female monarch, and one who had inherited the Tudor habits of absolutism, had to acknowledge male power. But as Cynthia Herrup writes, "[w]e have been slower to realize that male kings might also have had a gender problem."[73] And despite the opposition set out in the first paragraph of this essay, the

70. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition*, 14:243–258.

71. Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 193.

72. See Susan Frye, "The Myth of Elizabeth at Tilbury," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 95-114.

73. Cynthia Herrup, "The King's Two Genders," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 3 (July 2006): 493-510, quotation on 502. Herrup argues convincingly that both male and female monarchs in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England relied on the ability to represent themselves in the language of the other sex.

Stuart rhetoric of parental monarchy was ultimately not single-sex either. The same king whose language of paternity seemed to oppose itself to Elizabeth's language of motherhood in some texts adopted a verbal maternity in others. The pacific James calls himself a "loving nourish [nurse] father" in *Basilikon Doron*, offering his subjects the "nourish milk" of his guidance and aid.[74] Like Prospero, he combines genders in his parenthood. Perhaps James' linguistic nod to female activity was, like Elizabeth's male-centered language, a necessary bow to his half of his subjects rather than only an attempt to take their power.

Like the witchcraft prosecutors who eventually stopped hanging lying-in maids (though not until some time after James left the throne), *The Tempest*'s protagonist approaches a reconciliation with feminized modes of power at the play's end. The play revisits the ultimately ineffectual witchery of *Henry VI Parts 1 and 2* (c. 1588-1591) and *Macbeth* as both Sycorax and Prospero, perhaps fittingly seen as a single character, and one more powerful than its Shakespearean predecessors. The dead Sycorax picks up where *1 Henry VI*'s executed Pucelle leaves off. With the exception of *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare's more contemporaneous plays' restorations, reunions, and preservations inform *The Tempest*'s representation of the returned supernatural mother, a figure who appears as the Abbess Emilia in what may be his earliest play, *The Comedy of Errors*, but disappears soon after. (Continuing the maternal pattern of the late plays, *The Tempest*'s followup *Henry VIII* [1612-1613] cannot even acknowledge Anne Boleyn's death,

74. See *The Political Works of James I*, ed. C. H. McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), 3. The image comes from Isaiah 49:23.

instead leaving her alive as a new mother.) Sycorax's revival in Prospero's verbal tributes to her and to maternity, then, is a synechdoche for the revival of the mother in Shakespeare's plays as a whole. *The Winter's Tale*'s Hermione and *Pericles*'s Thaisa, by contrast, are rediscovered in the flesh, so privileging Sycorax's return in Prospero's language over her physical absence may seem another preference of paternal abstraction and intellectuality over maternal bodily claims. But the play itself ultimately rejects these divisions. When Prospero asks for his audience's "[g]entle breath," the Epilogue imagines words as body (329). Blurring the distinctions between somatized motherhood and abstracted fatherhood, feminine witchcraft and masculine sorcery, Prospero as maternal patriarch forms part of a pattern that encompasses *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*. *The Tempest* takes *Twelfth Night*'s vision of symbolic reproduction and finally accommodates that vision within the more traditional reproductive model that troubles the earlier play; the father so insistently rejected in *Merchant* and the mother overlooked in both earlier plays are allowed into the world of generative metaphor.

Chapter 6

Volpone's Colorless Heaven

Shakespeare's uncharacteristic observance of the neoclassical unities of drama in *The Tempest* is much vaunted. *Volpone*'s adherence to them is perhaps even more so, if mostly by Jonson himself. The "laws of time, place, persons he observeth," announces the play's Prologue; "[f]rom no needful rule he swerveth."[1] *Volpone* ignores consistency of action but sticks rigorously to the unities of time and place, just as the Prologue promises. Its events take shape over the course of a day and in one area—Venice, and usually Volpone's house. As the next few pages show, that unity of place in particular lends weight to a general impression of enclosure, crowding, shrinkage, not rare in urban comedy.[2] But even more than usual for the genre, and more than *The Tempest*'s pinches, cramps, and confinement to a tree, an island, a rock, *Volpone*'s condensing is pervasive.[3] The play's rhetorical forms compress too. The first part of this chapter delineates those

1. Ben Jonson, *Volpone*, ed. Robert N. Watson, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 2003), 31-32. All subsequent citations are within the body of the essay.

2. For a recent treatment of space in Jonson, see James D. Mardock, *Our Scene is London: Ben Jonson's City and the Space of the Author* (New York: Routledge, 2008). In a perhaps predictably gendered division of labor, the Jonsonian space I discuss here is domestic, whereas Mardock studies a wider geographical sphere. Among other points, Mardock argues that the success with which Jonson's characters negotiate urban space correlates with their moral stature. In *Volpone*, I think, overt spatial negotiation correlates with social subordination, whether short- or long-term. See Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, *Ben Jonson Revised* (New York: Twayne, 1991), esp. 34-44, for other thematic functions of the unities in Jonson's middle comedies.

3. Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Arden, 1999) . Prospero threatens Caliban with "cramps," "[s]ide-stitches, that shall pen [his] breath up," and fiercely stinging pinches (1.2.326-331); he also warns that he will stick Ariel in the "entrails" of a tree, just as Sycorax had (295-96, 274-77). I use Stephen Orgel's Oxford edition of *The Tempest* for chapter five because Orgel's particular editorial interests align with that chapter's topics. Vaughan and Vaughan's Arden 3 edition, though, strikes me as having more convincing punctuation.

multiple compressions and their domestic provenance. Ensuing sections discuss how the play in general and Volpone in particular imagine escape.

With its telescoping effect, the acrostic Argument boils down the play's action to an executive summary:

> V *olpone, childless, rich, feigns sick, despairs,*
>
> O *ffers his state to hopes of several heirs,*
>
> L *ies languishing; his parasite receives*
>
> P *resents of all, assures, deludes; then weaves*
>
> O *ther cross- plots, which ope' themselves, are told.*
>
> N *ew tricks for safety are sought; they thrive; when, bold,*
>
> E *ach tempts th'other again, and all are sold*.
>
> (1-7)

Even "open," ironically, is constricted (5). And the Would-Bes' perpetual possessive pronouns likewise shrink space as they make the listener gag on spurious ownership and community. Lady Would-Be recommends "[y]our elecampane root" and "[y]our sixteen cloves" to the illness-feigning Volpone (3.4.54). But "your music," she says to him whom she addresses as "Volp," is "your true rapture," perhaps superior to "[y]our Petrarch" (72, 39, 74, 93). Sir Politic promises Peregrine information fit for "your crude traveller"; for example, what's important to "your Italian" (4.1.7, 30). The language forces an intimate and proprietary relationship where none is necessary or desired. The Would-Bes' "your" is seemingly less self-centered but actually more intrusive than "my,"

leaving little room for the hearer in its preemptive impersonality. Likewise the abused "our." In response to Volpone's plaint that he is "perturbed" (98), Lady Would-Be, though plainly not speaking of herself, responds that "in such cases we must cure ourselves, / Make use of our philosophy" (99-100). Sir Politic, however, occasionally shifts to less chummy singular pronouns—particularly when none is warranted. Here he describes his arrival in Venice: "I . . . took me a house, / Dealt with my Jews" (4.1.40-41) and his occupation since then: "[w]ith certain projects, that I have" (46). The ethical dative and extra indicators of possession reinscribe Jonson's more general mockery of greed in *Volpone*, and the pronoun glut makes for a social crowding that replicates the compactness of the unities.

The asides induce a similar reduction of psychic space. Viewed from a distance, their subjects, usually a Would-Be but sometimes one of the other fortune-hunters, shrink. Meanwhile the gap between speaker and audience narrows. When after various bits of state misinformation Sir Pol introduces himself as "Politic Would-Be," Peregrine's aside is more belittling than witty: "O, that speaks him" (2.1.25). Later, entering the audience's space, Peregrine tells us, "O this knight, / Were he well known, would be a precious thing / To fit our English stage" (56-57). And when Sir Pol babbles irrelevantly about the geopolitical intrigues of the "*Mamaluchi*," Jonson gives Peregrine an aside that Peregrine more or less repeats to Sir Pol one line later. Peregrine to the audience: "'Heart! / This Sir Pol will be ignorant of nothing" (97-98). Peregrine to Sir Pol: "It seems, sir, you know all?" (99). The point appears not just a reinforcement of contempt

for Sir Pol, but also a compulsory closeness between the audience and Peregrine. As is often the case in Jonson's addresses to potential patrons, the flattery is sullied by its obviousness (though perhaps not too much in an era that liked its deference explicit). More to the point, the attempt at engaging the audience parallels the inheritance-seekers' invasive grooming of Volpone. His household position, which I discuss further below, is the originating point of the psychic and spatial limitation.

Mosca's and Volpone's asides are much funnier than Peregrine's. But they too limit the audience's reactions to the lines they succeed: Mosca follows Voltore's "I am sorry / To see [Volpone] still thus weak," with "[t]hat he is not weaker" (1.3.17-18), and we can only see the lawyer as hypocritical. Multidimensionality is successfully intercepted. In a choice Shakespeare would probably not have made here, Jonson shies away from the darkened mood psychological complexity would bring. Volpone's aside serves the same circumscribing purpose when Corbaccio brings him a drug. Corbaccio's protest to Mosca: "My life for his, 'tis but to make him sleep." Volpone's interpretation: "Ay, his last sleep, if he would take it" (1.4.17-18). These comments are convincing readings of the figures they mock, of course, but they also entrap readers and viewers into cozy collusion with the speaker. Occasionally the asides function otherwise: Bonario, believing Mosca's protestations of innocence in 3.2, muses "What? Does he weep? The sign is soft, and good; / I do repent me, that I was so harsh" (18-19). Here the lines are clearly meant to delineate Bonario's goodness and gullibility, not exactly to make the audience side with him in the matter of Mosca's harmlessness. More often, the aside is at

the expense of its subject, rendered small. Volpone's audience-aimed remark about Lady Would-Be: "I have ta'en a grasshopper by the wing" (3.4.55). She is neatly summed up, contained, verbally shrunken, and kept from the open sky that tantalizes in various parts of the play.

Sir Politic Would-Be imagines intelligence smuggled in cabbages, oysters, cockles, even a toothpick; he eventually traps himself in a tortoise shell (2.1.70, 74, 80). But the theme of all this containment is most centrally domestic, and Volpone's material legacy of wrappings and small containers renders *Volpone*'s concern with confinement more literal—Mosca counts "chests," "cabinets," "box[es]" (5.3.14, 28, 33, 5.2.79). Jealous husband Corvino punningly says he'll have his house's window "dammed up" and threatens wife Celia with "hell" if she strays toward it to look outside (2.5.50, 53). Greedy lawyer Voltore, aided by Mosca, also partakes of constriction: "here I wear your keys / See all your coffers and your caskets locked" (1.3.40-41). Volpone's body itself is particularly subject to tight enclosure and crowding. He suffers the possibility that Mosca will "stop . . .up" his mouth or "stifle him" and the invented medical recommendation of "a flayed ape clapped to his breast" (1.5.67, 2.6.30); of Lady Would-Be, Volpone complains that she has "All [his] house, / But now, steamed like a bath, with her thick breath" (3.5.7-8). At home, visits from others confine Volpone to his couch, and sometimes trap him within his own body, his eyes closed and speech muted as in 1.4 and 1.5. The first time Volpone leaves the house, Corvino beats him (2.3.1, s.d.). The second time, he becomes ill (5.1.5-7).

Such domestic incarceration evokes any one of a number of misused Victorian heroines. But as Ann Christensen notes, enclosure is a common state in Jonson's corpus, from *Epicoene*'s Morose to Pennyboy Senior's taste for confinement in *The Staple of News*. Adult men seem particularly susceptible. However, the only congenial example Christensen cites is from poetry. The structure of "An Epistle Answering to One that Asked to be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben" (1623) enacts the containment requested in the title, the last line repeating the request in the process of fulfilling it: "Sir, you are sealéd of the Tribe of Ben."[4] By way of comparison, the abortive sonnet "To Fine Lady Would-Be," reviling a courtier who ends all her pregnancies herself, concludes with an equation of enclosure and death.[5] This latter poem, which showcases Jonson at his social worst—and his vivid, immediate verbal best—is perhaps more strongly connected to *Volpone*'s fathers than to the play's Lady Would-Be. Though Jonson intends vituperation, its catalogue of Lady Would-Be's reproductive fears (pain, dishonor, ugliness, loss of time, end of pleasure) induces a sneaking sympathy. Presumably the title refers to what Jonson sees as the Lady's inadequate femininity, unattractive ambition, and general inauthenticity, but after his list of childbearing's physical ravages, the poem's final

4. Ann C. Christensen, "Reconsidering Ben Jonson and the 'Centered Self,'" *South Central Review* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 1-16, 6. Also see Jonson, "An Epistle," in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ed. Hugh Maclean (New York: Norton, 1974), l. 75. Thomas Greene observes that the plays treat the idea of *home* differently from the poems, with a sense of embattlement. See Thomas M. Greene, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," in *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 194-217.

5. Jonson often favors twelve-line poems, half a line longer than Gerard Manley Hopkins' "curtal sonnets," when writing of the deaths of young children. Cf. "On My First Son" and "On My First Daughter," in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ed. Maclean, which mirror the cut-off lives of his children in their abbreviated form, one pair of lines short of a regular sonnet. "On My First Daughter," which treats the death of a six-month-old, shortens the sonnet line length too, substituting pentameter with tetrameter. Subsequent citations are parenthetical.

couplet, "Write, then on thy womb, / Of the not born, yet buried, here's the tomb," raises the possibility that what the Lady "Would" like, in her series of abortions, is simply to "Be."[6] As in rather than not to be. If her womb doesn't become a tomb for her progeny, it might become one for her. The happy circumscription of the "son" in the "Tribe of Ben" poem is also upside down in *Volpone*. Often literally, and in a more general sense thematically, what prompts all Volpone's unsought confinement and much of the play's forced intimacy is his pretense of making everyone he sees his sole heir—his successful performance of paternity. Volpone *must* remain enclosed, a part of his physical estate, to maintain his deceptive status as potential legator. Like family life itself, the compression increases the play's emotional intensity as it reduces freedom.[7] (Perhaps the unnamed fourth unity, after action, time, and space, is the unity of domesticity.)

Despite *Volpone*'s pseudo-paternal cramping, the play also acknowledges paternity's more customary association with authority, strength, even virtue. In the case of Volpone's rumored and incomplete children Nano, Castrone, and Androgyno, the dwarf Nano's smallness and Castrone's likewise diminished body underscore Volpone's domestic reduction. Their departure in the play's final act signals his social and physical decline: "Master Mosca called us out of doors," Nano tells Volpone, "And bids us all go play, and took the keys" (5.5.10-11). But Volpone's discomfiture at seeing them outside his house simultaneously illuminates the power of his paternalism and the play's

6. Ben Jonson, *Epigrams* 62, "To Fine Lady Would-Be," in Epigrams *and* The Forest, ed. Richard Dutton (New York: Routledge, 2003), 48.

7. The Beckettian compression also makes *Volpone* Jonson's most exciting play, alongside the equally cramped *The Alchemist*.

ultimately dismissive attitude toward progeny: "How now! Who let you loose? Whither go you, now? / . . . to drown kitlings?" (5.11.8-9). Dependents (the trio) are destructive creatures to be controlled; offspring (the hypothetical victim "kitlings") are insignificant. The dedicatory epistle also figures a powerful parenthood. As is common, he imagines literary production in particular as reproductive, acknowledging others' perception of his work that "not my youngest infant but hath come into the world with all his teeth" (45-46). But reproductivity is usually vulnerability for both parent and child. Lesser poets' creations are "abortive" (37). Mosca raises the subject of weak children almost as soon as he speaks. Volpone is virtuous in his reluctance to "devour / Soft prodigals," he says, unlike those Cronuses who will "swallow / A melting heir" (1.1.44-45). The characterization is unconvincing. In the second part of the "melting heir" passage I quote above, Mosca adds that Volpone doesn't "[t]ear forth the fathers of poor families / Out of their bed, and coffin them, alive, / In some kind, clasping prison" (1.1.45-46). But as the familial "kind" suggests, this rejected alternative to Volpone's way of making a living is not opposition but repetition. He is nearly coffined alive by his grasping would-be dependents and their desire for his frailty.

So *Volpone* is in part about the desire *not* to be a father, and about the conflict between this desire and the ambition for powerful masculine domesticity, with its potential for legatorship. Volpone may be the "true father" of his household dependents, but he "has given 'em nothing" (1.5.48-49). The hint at Volpone's biological paternity of his servants exaggerates and focuses the mysterious servant-master link we see later in

Prospero's acknowledgment of responsibility for Caliban ("this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine" [5.1.278-279]). Still, *Volpone*'s satirical treatment of whatever is occult (almost all its gossip and confidences turn out to be lies) suggests a skepticism about Volpone's fatherhood; even the play wishes not to acknowledge possible descendants. Corbaccio disinherits his son, and Castrone and Androgyno, both "eunuchs" in the play's parlance (1.2.61), vie for the position of least reproductive, most likely not to breed. Rounding out the trio of dependents, Nano is infantile rather than paternal. He delineates his advantages over a more usual filial model:

> First, for your dwarf, he's little, and witty,
>
> And everything, as it is little, is pretty;
>
> Else, why do men say to a creature of my shape
>
> So soon as they see him, 'It's a pretty little ape'?
>
> And, why a pretty ape, but for pleasing imitation,
>
> Of greater men's action, in a ridiculous fashion?
>
> Beside, this feat body of mine doth not crave
>
> Half the meat, drink, and cloth one of your bulks will have.
>
> (3.3.9-16)

Nano's permanent smallness keeps his imitation from being the threatening sort we see in *Every Man in His Humour*. He, not the imitated "greater men," will always remain "ridiculous" (14), making them greater still. (A few years later, Caliban's "most

ridiculous monster" serves a similar function, flattering Trinculo (2.2.163).[8] But the greatness need not be social in the passage above. In context, it appears simply to reference largeness. Regular children grow up and stop being reassuringly "little." Too, Nano wants few of the material resources sought by those progeny or by Volpone's would-be heirs. We can see Nano's advantage to Volpone phrased differently with Mosca's report of the rumor that the "dwarf, the fool, the eunuch are all his" (1.5.48). "[A]ll" may function as a pronoun renaming the household dependents, emphasizing Volpone's virile paternity with its multiplicity. Or more interestingly, it may be an adverb modifying "his," another example of the childish possessiveness that permeates the play. These fantasy children, unlike real ones, are exclusively owned. Here again the play rejects conventional fatherhood.

Volpone's first soliloquy trumpets his happiness in being free of standard progeny:

> What should I do,
> But cocker up my genius, and live free
> To all delights my fortune calls me to?
> I have no wife, no parent, child, ally,
> To give my substance to; but whom I make,
> Must be my heir: and this makes men observe me.
>
> (1.1.70-75)

8. On children's imitative images, see David Lee Miller's fascinating "The Father's Witness: Patriarchal Images of Boys," *Representations* 70, no.1 (Spring 2000), 114-140.

But the position comes with ambivalence. Lacking a child doesn't mean lacking pride in creation. Like Jonson, who crows that the play is "[f]rom his own hand, without a co-adjutor, / Novice, journeyman, or tutor," and that in it "no eggs are broken" (Prologue 17-18, 20), Volpone rejoices that his heir will be entirely of his own making (74-75). Editors usually identify the eggs as a slighting reference to the slapstick entertainment at the Lord Mayor's annual feast, where a fool leapt into a large custard. But given *Volpone*'s broader avian subtext—Corvino's crow, Corbaccio's raven, and Voltore's vulture, along with the parrots, nightingales, peacocks, ostriches, and phoenix Volpone proposes eating at 3.8.201-04—the unbroken eggs suggest reproduction too. *Volpone* is hostile to paternity but not to children. It can't be: its aversion to the notion of having a child is part of an attraction to being one.

Jonson's paternal reputation, conflicted though it is, accompanies a more profoundly filial bent. The stance that privileges filiation over paternity changes much less over the course of his career than it does over Shakespeare's, which moves gradually away from a focus on the travails of the young. Among the closest Shakespearean matches for Mosca's persuading Bonario to hear his own disinheritance—previously negotiated by Mosca himself—is Edmund's manipulation of Gloucester's relationship with Edgar in *Lear*. (*Lear* was first performed around the same time as *Volpone*; perhaps the remnants of succession anxiety that more famously inform the Shakespeare play shape Jonson's too.) Mosca, to Bonario: "Sir, here conceal'd, you may hear all" (3.6.1). *Lear*'s Edmund, assuring Gloucester that he will witness Edgar's filial disloyalty: "I will

place you where you shall hear us confer of this and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction."[9] But *Lear*, unlike *Volpone*, unfolds the psychic consequences of that manipulation for both the children *and* the father over the course of the play. And Edmund's coldly formal Latinisms and ironic "satisfaction" at 1.2 make Gloucester's less articulate ravings ("O villain, villain! . . . Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! . . . Abominable villain!" [77-80]) sympathetic rather than merely hateful and misguided. At least for its male characters, *Lear* gives verbal energy to both filiation and paternity. Jonson, on the other hand, emphasizes only Bonario's emotional response to *Volpone*'s parallel situation: "Yet / Cannot my thought imagine this a truth" (3.6.3-4). For an instant Jonson's investment in filiation even allows conflicting impulses that lend Bonario more than his usual single dimension. Not so for his father, who requires little urging to divest himself of a son.

The social violation Bonario eventually witnesses from his hiding place is not disinheritance but attempted rape, initially planned as seduction. The scenario anticipates *The Tempest*'s intergenerational voyeur scene, Prospero's spying on the courtship he has already set in motion between Miranda and Ferdinand. In *Volpone*'s threats of disinheritance and assault, older victimizes younger. But in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare turns Prospero's manipulation of the pair into an opportunity to demonstrate his selflessness: "So glad of this as they I cannot be, / Who are surprised withal, but my rejoicing / At nothing can be more" (3.1.92-94). The sexual threats are contained by the

9. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, in *The Complete Works*, ed. Bevington, 1.2.92-94. Other *Lear* citations are in the body of the essay.

father and come exclusively from the young, whether Caliban ("Thou didst prevent me, I had peopled else / This isle with Calibans" [1.2.351-52]) or Ferdinand, whose protest that "the strong'st suggestion, / Our worser genius can, shall never melt / Mine honour into lust" is undercut just slightly by the *description* of his swimming as a "lusty stroke" [4.1.26-28, 2.1.120]). But despite the actual and potential aggression of the young, *The Tempest*'s initially high estimate of fatherhood balances its impulse toward filiation. Prospero is "so rare a wondered father" (4.1.123); the children Miranda, Ferdinand, and Claribel are equally valued. Miranda is a "cherubin" (1.2.152), and Alonso, speaking of Tunis, laments, "Would I had never / Married my daughter there, for coming thence / My son is lost and (in my rate) she too, / Who is so far from Italy removed / I ne'er again shall see her" (2.1.108-112). As a satire, *Volpone* can hardly be expected to have characters voicing such sentiments. They do, however, wax passionate about other relationships.

"Am I inscribed [Volpone's] heir, for certain? . . . / . . . But am I sole heir?" the apparently wealthy Voltore asks Mosca (1.3.33, 44). Mosca's answer: "All my hopes / Depend upon your worship. I am lost, / Except the rising sun do shine on me" (35-37). As Robert Watson points out, the ascendant is first Voltore, and eventually Mosca himself.[10] Relational rather than fiscal acquisitiveness is the play's core. Not only does *Volpone* limn a tension between the desire for gerontocratic privilege and clout and the distaste for fathering, it also represents the core of that distaste: as I've suggested above, the wish to

10. Watson, ed., 37 n.

be a child instead, a rising son *of* a father. Despite gerontocracy's usual overlap with paternity, *Volpone*'s characters are considerably more interested in filiation.[11] That Voltore calls Mosca "flesh-fly" indicates both the carrion nature of those to whom Mosca attaches himself and the play's abhorrence of dependents and reproduction (5.9.1). *The Tempest* later associates the same term more explicitly with filiation and paternity, using it to figure Ferdinand as both host and parasite: "I am in my condition / A prince, Miranda; I do think, a king— / I would, not so!—and would no more endure / This wooden slavery than to suffer / The flesh-fly blow my mouth" (3.1.59-63). Coming into his patrimony on his father's death, Ferdinand is the flesh-fly he imagines birthing. And although "wooden slavery" refers to the log-carrying Prospero has assigned Ferdinand, the sonic echo of line 61's "would[s]" also connects it to the newfound monarchy Ferdinand regrets. The completion of inheritance is enslavement.

Mosca is on the verge of acquiring a powerful father-in-law in the courtroom when Volpone threatens, "my substance shall not glue you, / Nor screw you, into a family" (5.12.62, 87-88). While *Volpone*'s characters seek filiation and bequests, they are like Ferdinand ambivalent about the status those bequests grant. The father is so important that the child hesitates to take his place. The barely relevant Sir Pol plot's focus on rumor would fit more neatly in *The Staple of News*, but in alignment with *The Tempest*'s distaste for a maturity that comes at parental expense, it also touches on the father's singular status. The most hidden secret Sir Pol can imagine is one to be told "not

11. On gerontocracy and paternity, see Keith Thomas, "Age and Authority in Early Modern England," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 62 (1976): 205-248, esp. 228.

to your father" (4.1.14). The parent is socially central, albeit in an unusual role as confidant manqué. Sir Pol says this to Peregrine, the one figure in the play otherwise separate from any association with home or family. But the expression's very inapplicability indicates the social importance of its content. That the father is the first figure to leap to Sir Pol's mind indicates the position's centrality even in a play ostensibly about other concerns.

However, in Corbaccio Jonson showcases the disjunctions between an abstract respect for the father, an individually repulsive father, and a rejection of paternity. The older man's repeated and misleading utterance of "I do conceive" to Mosca (1.4.28, 88, 122) is rendered more obviously reproductive by the following reassurance, as suspect as his comprehension: "I do not doubt, to be a father to thee" (127). But Corbaccio's fatherhood consists of disowning. Conversely, at various points his phrasing makes what initially appears materialism betray a preoccupation with filiation. When he speaks of writing his son out of his will, the operative word is a mere verb, "disinherit" (1.4.95, 3.9.8). But where Volpone is concerned, Corbaccio's vocabulary, echoing Voltore's "But am I sole heir?" at 1.3.44, is nominal, one of *identity*: "Not I his heir? . . . "To be his heir. . . . Published me his heir?" (1.4.24, 66, 112). And though Mosca's gratuitous "your" in "your physician should / Never be his heir" encourages Corbaccio's acquisitiveness (23-24), the second half of the passage also urges his and the play's language of filial selfhood.

The choice of the identity-conferring term "heir" over the less absolute "inherit" in connection to Volpone indicates how much the characters see the semi-paternal figure as bestowing a totalized existence. The play hardly acknowledges this effect when it comes to children and legatees. To some extent, its language *must* reject the possibility, since the imbalance is built into the lexicon. "Father" and "son" are terms of symmetrical utility; "heir" has no true equivalent on the other side of the last will and testament. "Legator" nearly suffices, but its three legalistic syllables both signal and effect its lack of colloquial usefulness. Similarly, when Mosca tells Bonario that Bonario will hear himself "written bastard," we might note the lack of a word for one who *creates* bastards.[12] The English language manages to overlook these paternal categories, lexically rich though it is. The implication: not fathering, but filiation, makes men what they are.[13] The play's representation of identity formation is hardly surprising from a psychoanalytic perspective but at odds with a culture that relied so heavily on paternal metaphors of authority, from the realm of the spirit to the rooms of the court. (No less a figure than Pope Sixtus V presented children rather than parents as the source of manhood in a 1587 brief on marriage.[14]) And oddly enough, being an heir rather than having one is what

12. "[W]ritten bastard" and other passages in *Volpone* anticipate the more explicit link of writing with paternity and filiation in *The Staple of News*. Cf. Voltore's "[a]m I inscribed his heir?," Mosca's "I do beseech you, sir, you will vouchsafe / To write me, i' your family," and Corbaccio's "[p]ublished me his heir" (1.3.33-35, 1.4.112).

13. This dynamic is different for mothers, but they don't factor into *Volpone*.

14. Pope Sixtus V's brief *Cum frequenter* (1587), Valeria Finucci writes, was "interpreted as declaring that eunuchs, castrati, and *spadones* (that is, men with damaged sexual organs) were not real men [for purposes of legal marriage] because they could not offer intergenerational continuity" ("Introduction: Genealogical Pleasure, Genealogical Disruptions," in *Generation and Degeneration: Tropes of Reproduction in Literature and History from Antiquity through Early Modern Europe*, ed. Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee [Durham: Duke University Press, 2001]), 1-14, quotation on.1. "The ability to

assuages fears of mortality. Corbaccio's final meditation on the prospect of becoming Volpone's heir: "I may ha' my youth restored to me, why not?" (1.4.129).

Filiation is what makes Celia Volpone's polestar too, although at times she seems to be in the play solely as an older man's fantasy of what it's like to be a girl. What Jonson eventually suggests is that being a girl is a lot like being an old man. In *The Tempest*, Miranda's body, subject to hostile takeover, revisits Prospero's vulnerably aging one. Jonson's Volpone and Celia are similarly linked as objects of courtship, his decaying person no less a lure than her youthful one. Both are trapped in their rooms. Celia's appeal is "o' the first year" (1.5.109); Volpone's is of the last. By their impermanence they draw urgent suitors. The similarities extend beyond their shared status as bait, appearing in the play's smallest details. Looking forward to *The Tempest*'s "[T]hose are pearls that were his eyes," an offer to a son bereft of a father (1.2.399), Corvino's effort to ingratiate himself with Volpone by bringing a "rich pearl" (1.5.13) reappears in Lady Would-Be's similar attempt at 3.4.52-53: "Seed-pearl were good now, boiled with syrup of apples / Tincture of gold, and coral." What's notable for the purpose of this argument is that Celia takes Volpone's place when she rejects the confining pearl necklace he offers (a "rope of pearl" [3.7.190]). Like Lady Would-Be, he tries to make it more palatable by presenting it as a drink, albeit a less threateningly germinal one. "Dissolve, and drink 'em," he says; the object of the first command might as well be

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perform sexually (*potentia coeundi*) may have made a man look like one," Finucci continues, but the ability to generate (*potentia generandi*) alone guaranteed that he was one in the eyes of the legal and ecclesiastical system" (2).

Celia as the pearls (192).[15] Regardless, the pearl echo marks Celia's function as Volpone's desired alter ego, a role she fills in various ways. The most important of those for this chapter is her tie to an abstract, absent father.

Other echoes likewise mark their similarity, filial and otherwise. After seeing Celia for the first time, Volpone cries to Mosca, "Oh, I am wounded," with a burning like a "fire / Whose vent is stopped" (2.4.1, 6-7). "My liver melts," he insists (9), recalling Celia's "flesh that melteth in the touch" at 1.5.113. Of course, Celia alone can assuage this torment, with "air from her refreshing breath" (2.4.10), despite Voltore's later claim that Volpone "is not able to endure the air" (4.5.20). (It's the heir, not the air, that Volpone cannot bear). The juxtaposition of fire and air evokes the four elements listed at 2.2.165-66 and thought to comprise the earth by theorists from Empedocles to Paracelsus. That Volpone assigns Celia the traditionally masculine and nebulous ones rather than the feminine, massy earth and water suggests again the play's alignment of the two characters. (Bonario, on the other hand, is threatened with being "common issue of the earth," a demotion that sets him apart both from his father and from the heavenly Celia [3.2.65]). Celia herself causes Volpone's "wound." Or rather, the "angry Cupid" in her eyes does (2.4.3). While the wrathful, demanding child mirrors both Volpone's hostile would-be suitor-heirs and Volpone himself, Celia's chastity and her alienation from her husband offer him a counter-fantasy of reproductive unencumberment. Her chastity, in its

15. For Bruce Thomas Boehrer, the consumption of the pearl is both Volpone's and Jonson's "acquisitive classicism" (Pliny's *Natural History* recounts the story of Cleopatra dissolving a pearl in wine to impress Mark Antony). See Boehrer, *The Fury of Men's Gullets: Ben Jonson and the Digestive Canal* (Philadelphia: University of Pennyslvania Press, 1997), 56.

rejection of the obligation to please others, is paradoxically *un*enclosing, countering Volpone's shrinking domestic space. Like *Volpone* in general, and Volpone especially, the eventually father-bound Celia manifests a simultaneous rejection of reproduction and a desire for paternal presence.

The ungrounded location of that presence is significant. In response to Volpone's highly detailed paternal domesticity in the play's present, which suffocates him in its various earthy and earthly obligations to dependents, it offers a child a vague, spacious domesticity in the future. As destinations, Celia's father and his house are liberatingly unspecific. The puerile fantasy of returning to a home idealized in its absence of pesky realistic detail, its paternal abstraction, responds to the dread of Volpone's aging in his own house. The decline and mortality we see more explicitly in the half-deaf Corbaccio are linked to Volpone and Celia too, and Volpone's language occasionally chimes with intimations of the afterlife. Volpone speaks of the noisy "bells, in time of pestilence" just after asking Mosca for "redemption" from the annoyance of Lady Would-Be's presence, "[f]or hell's sake" (3.5.5, 2, 11). Volpone's supposed legacy of "chests," "cabinets," and "box[es]" recalls both his domestic confinement and the coffin Mosca mentions as he prepares an inventory of the various containers (5.3.14, 28, 33, 5.2.79). And once Lady Would-Be asks whether Volpone's "thread [is] spun" (5.3.11), the vast quantities of "linen," "diaper," and "damask" in the will suggest not comforting if perhaps smothering domestic textiles, but winding-sheets (11, 14). As in the case in *Twelfth Night* and *The Staple of News*, the will is unreal anyway (*Merchant*'s will is real, but more or less

violated). The genitally signifying term and the testament's imaginary nature underscore *Volpone*'s representation of paternity as an absence.

Even the feast Volpone proposes to Celia rests more heavily than most on ruin:

> The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingales,
> The brains of peacocks, and of ostriches
> Shall be our food: and could we get the phoenix,
> (Though nature lost her kind) she were our dish.
>
> (3.7.201-04)

Presumably, Volpone means to tempt Celia with the varied complexity of the world in the meal, but the menu reduces that world, making it mute (201). Katharine Eisaman Maus suggests that because *Volpone*'s world relies on recycling rather than producing objects and ideas, the only real originality available to the play's characters lies in destruction.[16] Her point perhaps applies to their attitudes to progeny too, since the production of children is inherently unoriginal. At any rate, the passage above involves a specific sort of annihilation. Birds typically incarnate spirit and sky (in the *Metamorphoses*, for one example, they figure mortals liberated from earthly forms and earthly pain, and sometimes deities), but in this case the non-mythical birds Volpone names are primarily those limited to the ground (peacocks and ostriches) or caged (parrots). Celia, by contrast, is a "swan" (1.5.110), capable of flight above and away. In fantasizing their deaths of creatures already kept from the heavens or confined by

16. Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Facts of the Matter: Satiric and Ideal Economies in the Jonsonian Imagination," in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, ed. Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1991), 64-89, 73.

domestication, Volpone imagines a liberation of housed captives. And in dreaming of killing the phoenix—the one creature explicitly independent of forebears—he also emphasizes the impossibility of self-origination. That is to say, he emphasizes, like *Merchant*'s final act, the necessity of parentage.

Mosca's reminders of death make the afterlife, paternal or not, a more immediate concept. He imagines Voltore wondering what would happen "if [Volpone] died today" (1.2.101), and with cheerfully obvious insincerity tells Volpone his hope for his master's long life: "when I am lost in blended dust / And hundred such as I am, in succession" (119-120), "you shall live, / Still" (121-22). Given the appreciation for freedom of movement Mosca voices in 3.1, the wish for "still" living is perhaps as much malediction as otherwise. But at any rate, Volpone's "I long to have possession / Of my new present," ostensibly a response to Voltore's gift of plate, begins to sound like a plea for time, for a novelty impossibly eternal (116-17). Voltore's "would to heaven / I could as well give health to you" (1.3.19-20) clarifies the connection. Mosca pretends to have been busy "in an inner room" (2.6.9) when the first prospective heir shows up, but sees himself as "dropped from above," one who can "[s]hoot through the air, as nimbly as a star; / . . . be here, / And there, and here, and yonder" (3.1.8, 25, 26-27). In other words, *hic et ubique*. The phrasing echoes the Catholic prayers for the dead that Stephen Greenblatt discusses so evocatively in *Hamlet in Purgatory*.[17] But Mosca hardly aims at the graveyard or purgatory or hell. His stratospheric language suggests the other place. As for Volpone

17. See Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 16, 234-35, 237, 265-66 n. 15.

himself, his gleeful blasphemies—"even hell, with [gold] to boot, / Is made worth heaven," "for hell's sake"—shift over the course of the play (1.1.24-25, 3.5.11). His benediction of Mosca's dishonorable legal efforts is outrageous yet apparently sincere: "Need makes devotion," he admits; "heaven your labour bless" (3.9.63).

So suspicious is *Volpone* of earthly life itself, with its requisite embodiment, that even the forms of physicality necessary for sustenance are immoral. Like *The Tempest*, *Volpone*'s avian meal plays eating as depravity.[18] The only choice Celia has is to reject the meal. With it she rejects the world: "If you have touch of holy saints—or Heaven— / Do me the grace to let me 'scape—if not, / Be bountiful, and kill me" (3.7.242-44). But Volpone's bounty is already the killing kind. After the festivities, he imagines what sounds as much suicide pact as sexual rite: "we may, so, transfuse our wand'ring souls, / Out at our lips" (233-34). A sort of spiritual burp reverses the oral ingestion he has just proposed. This implicit death wish becomes explicit after the concealed Bonario leaps out to save Celia: "Fall on me, roof," Volpone cries, "and bury me in ruin, / Become my grave" (275-76). The falling roof recalls the troubled "roofs" Mosca mentions at 1.1.51; the juxtaposition represents literal domestic suffocation and crushing as a solution to the figurative domestic suffocation that Volpone's efforts at social manipulation require. As for the stakes of such a death, at various points the play acknowledges a longing for heaven in the senses both of paradise and of an afterlife transcending materiality. Nano's apparently irrelevant couplets on the transmigration of Pythagoras's soul into various life

18. Cf. p. 177 above.

forms before it lands in Androgyno point to a concern with both reproduction and life after death (1.2.6-1.2.54). The locution he uses to ask Nano stop discussing the Puritan who once hosted his soul is "quit thee, for heaven" (47). Nano's interest in the terms of Androgyno's existence is sexual as well as spiritual ("the delight of each sex thou canst vary?"), but the hermaphrodite quickly establishes that "those pleasures be stale and forsaken" (55). The sexual fluidity seems evidence of the body's irrelevance rather than of a heightened physical capacity. The soul's endurance is more important. Celia, as the heavenly sky beyond the roof, is the appropriately disembodied prize.

That lack of detail in Celia has sometimes occasioned frustration. Perhaps the representation of abstraction is incompatible with an aesthetic (or a politics) of social or psychological realism. In the last paragraph of "Jonson and the Neo-Classical Rules in *Sejanus* and *Volpone*," the generally restrained David Farley-Hills permits himself a moment of annoyance at the character's vacuity. "Decent women," he writes, "are only minimally represented in the colourless Celia."[19] Her colorlessness is both metaphorical and literal. "Bright as your gold! And lovely as your gold," Celia nonetheless evades specifics (1.5.114). She is lovely, a "blazing star," "ripe," but not really gold after all, since her "skin is whiter than a swan, all over! / Than silver, snow, or lilies!" (108-09, 110-111). And silver, for that matter, is not white (though Jonson's source Martial found it close enough, so perhaps that imprecision is not to be made too much of).[20] For all the

19. See David Farley-Hills, "Jonson and the Neo-Classical Rules in *Sejanus* and *Volpone*," *The Review of English Studies*, n.s., 46, no. 82 (May 1995): 153-173, quotation on 173.

20. Martial *Epigrams* 1.115.1-4:

Quaedam me cupit, invide Procille

language of hue, Celia seems to lack any certain color at all. Her appeal lies in its absence. Mosca's lascivious "whiter . . . all over" undermines even whatever specifics might reside in the largely genericizing blazons, since he cannot know whether this is in fact the case (109). Celia's physical particulars remain obscure, her psychological particulars unconvincing. Despite being closely "watched" (1.5.120-22), she, like her father, like Prospero in his manipulations of his daughter and future son-in-law, and like *Staple*'s Pennyboy Canter and *Every Man In*'s Kno'well in pursuit of their sons, is unseen. And intangible: her "flesh . . . melteth in the touch to blood" (113). Celia first appears at a high window (2.2.220, s.d.), presumably at the area above the stage early modern play companies called "the heavens." Her repeated expostulations reference heaven, God, and angels (3.7.31, 53, 67, 133).[21] A lack of desire for her seems to Volpone "a second hell" (3.4.28). Oppressed by Lady Would-Be, he prays, "[m]y good angel save me" (115). But heaven is an abstracted and disembodied place of absence. "Heaven for climate," as J. M. Barrie's Cruickshanks said, "and hell for company."[22] *Volpone* renders Celia, likewise, disembodied and abstract. To sum up: Celia is colorless

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Loto candidior puella cycno,
Argento, nive, lilio, ligustro,
Sed quandam volo nocte nigriorem, . . .

Martial's point is that he finds a dark woman much more attractive than the white-skinned one who pines for him. For classically educated viewers and readers, the allusion might undermine Celia's perceived physical appeal.

The gold and silver appearance ascribed to Celia suggests money, but Chris Bundrick points out to me that metals are also reflective (personal communication). Mirroring her observers, Celia appears to promise fulfilment of their desires.

21. On the mechanics of the heavens at the Globe, where *Volpone* was first performed, see Bernard Beckerman, *Shakespeare at the Globe, 1599-1609* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), esp. 92-94.

22. J. M. Barrie, *The Little Minister* (1891; New York: Scribner's, 1922), 32. A sentiment closer to *Volpone*'s is Sartre's Garcin's: "Hell is other people" ("L'enfer, c'est les autres"), from *No Exit* (*Huis clos*, 1944; New York: Vintage International, 1989), 45.

because she is heavenly and heavenly because she is colorless. She counters in advance Shakespeare's "blue-eyed" witch Sycorax, a specifically and usually unpleasantly somatic mother (1.2.269, 258-59). Like *The Tempest* after it, *Volpone* struggles with the idea of the body, but the Jonson play is never reconciled to it.

Celia's divine lack of profuse detail offers a solution to Volpone's and *Volpone*'s nightmares of psychological crowding and compressed paternal realism. Too, her blandness makes her an ideal vessel for the play's filial longings. Celia is the only figure in the play as unimaginable as God or heaven; equally important, she possesses the sort of idealized *paternal* abstraction I discuss in chapter 4. Her colorlessness manifests not just Jonsonian misogyny but religious and filial idealism too. The first of three un-women in Jonson's most highly regarded plays (she precedes the eponymous Epicoene [1609] and *The Alchemist*'s Queen of Fairy [1610]), Celia is also the least overtly cynical creation. Her lack of recognizably human qualities converges with her eventual sexual isolation, an anomalous end for a comic heroine. She can be neither psychologically realistic nor paired with Bonario, as Coleridge would have preferred, specifically because those conditions would prevent her return to a celestial daughterhood at the end of the play.[23] And Celia must be a child not because *Volpone*'s world likes children but because it likes filiation. Volpone's desire for her is mimetic, but not in the most orthodox sense. Rather, he imitates the object of his desire.

23. Coleridge, "Notes on Ben Jonson," ed. H. N. Coleridge, in *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, gen. ed. W. G. T. Shedd (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1858), 4:191.

Celia's heavenliness extends beyond her blank quality to a concern with the Father himself: "O, just God," she responds when Bonario appears to save her from rape (3.8.265). Bonario's contribution: "Forbear, foul ravisher, libidinous swine" (266). In the mouth of one just made aware of his disinheritance, "[f]orbear" registers as a Lacanian *nom-du-père*; a pun on a foul "forebear" is difficult to reject.[24] Volpone has just invited Celia to "act Ovid's tales, / Thou, like Europa now, and I like Jove" (220-21), but we can hardly imagine the libidinous ravisher Jove as a just god. Two cultures of divinity collide, one of classical moral realism and the other of Christian moral idealism. But Bonario's command reminds us that in both traditions the primary god is a forebear, a father. As Mercury says in Jonson's 1604 *Private Entertainment of the King and Queen*, written roughly two years before *Volpone*, the "bounty of Heaven" is "Father *Jove*."[25] Just as Celia's father-bound fate connects her to *Volpone*'s wish for filiation, her abstraction, her goodness, and her name link her to its half-buried concerns with paradisiacal life after death. The gods and "forebear" pun in this scene remind us that filiation and the afterlife blur in the play. To be with or in generic, heavenly Celia, and all her pablum, is a child's reunion with the abstract father. That we never hear anything concrete about Celia's actual father, who never appears onstage, parallels heaven's mystery and disembodiment. Both sacred and child of the sacred, Celia herself occupies the same paradoxical location

24. The English translation is "name of the father," capitalized in translations of later works in which Lacan developed the concept. Initially, though, with a pun on "non," the phrase indicated the father's role as prohibitor. See Jacques Lacan, "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," (1955-56), in Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1977; London: Routledge, 1989), 137-172.

25. Ben Jonson, *A Private Entertainment of the King and Queen* (1604; The Holloway Pages Ben Jonson Page, 2003), http://hollowaypages.com/jonson1692king.htm.

that Christ does. Like Miranda too, the "cherubin / . . . that did preserve" Prospero (1.2.152-53), Celia is a bridge to the inaccessible. She offers salvation through the filial identity that associates her with the Father above.

Volpone's heaven is peculiar neither in the Jonsonian corpus nor in early modern culture as a whole. The place for detail is hell, as the suffocatingly particularized infernoscapes of Jonson's contemporary Pieter Brueghel the Younger ("Hell Brueghel") and their predecessor Bosch suggest. The period's representations of heaven, on the other hand, tend to be transcendently vague when not altogether lacking. Evidence of absence is notoriously difficult to provide, but one example stands out: Jonson's "To Heaven" (1616) never actually mentions heaven. It instead addresses "[g]ood and great God" from the first line to the last.[26] In *Paradise Lost,* the epic detail allotted to the Garden and hell far outstrips the minimal description accorded to heaven:

> . . . empyreal Heav'n, extended wide
> In circuit, undetermined square or round,
> With opal towr's and battlements adorned
> Of living sapphire, once [Satan's] native seat; . . . .[27]

Despite its "circuit," Milton takes care to tell us that heaven's shape is unclear. And the precision of "opal towr's" and "sapphire" battlements hardly compensates for the

26. Jonson, *The Forest* 15, "To Heaven," in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, quotation on line 1.
Jonson's heaven is most frequently part of a casual oath—"by Heaven," "Heaven knows," "Heaven forgive," and so on.

27. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York: Modern Library, 2008), 2:1047-1050.

mutable imprecision of the clouds and air they name. Opal is iridescent, for that matter, like Celia all colors and no color at once. For John Dryden, writing twenty years after Milton, heaven was no more detailed, a "vast abyss" for a "virgin-daughter of the skies."[28] Perhaps for an earth-bound believer to describe heaven fully would be an act of hubris. When the language of heaven *is* more precise, that language is often domestic, voicing a dependent's ideal of the paternal household. Milton elaborates slightly on his picture of heaven in Book 3, but we only find out that in it the "Almighty Father" is "High Thron'd above all highth," with his "onely Son" at his right, "radiant image of his Glory" (56, 58, 64, 63). And for a less literary example, in 1615 a conspirator in the Sir Thomas Overbury murder, Sir Jervis Elvis, described heaven in the bland and no doubt sincere way of seventeenth-century gallows speeches and twentieth-century televangelists alike: God, he says, has done him "a special Favour this way to call [him] Home."[29] Elvis imagines himself a returning prodigal, and by extension a child. One's youth is restored in the presence of the Father.

Sometimes that youth is literal. "Being so much too good for earth, / Heaven vows to keep him," Jonson wrote in 1602 of Salathiel (Salomon) Pavy, dead at thirteen.[30] As often as not, Jonson's heaven is a place for children. And the "bells, in time of

28. John Dryden, "To the Pious Memory of the Accomplished Young Lady, Mrs. Anne Killigrew," in *Poetry, Prose, and Plays*, ed. Douglas Grant (1686; London: Hart-Davis, 1952), ll. 11, 1.

29. Sir Jervis Elvis quoted in Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, "The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no.2 (Summer 1989): 259-275, 274.

In 1987 televangelist Oral Roberts famously used the notion that God would "call [him] home" as a threat rather than a softening of death. For a contemporary account of the plea's aftermath, see Richard N. Ostling, Barbara Dolan, and Michael P. Harris, "Raising Eyebrows and the Dead," *Time*, Monday July 13, 1987, http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,964970-1,00.html.

30. Jonson, *Epigrams* 120, "Epitaph on S. P., a Child of Q. El. Chapel," in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ll. 23-24. Subsequent quotations are parenthetical .

pestilence" that Lady Would-Be's chatter evokes at 3.5.5 recall something more particularly painful than the general threat of mortality, Jonson's own daughter and son, killed by plague. His son died in 1603, roughly three years before the play's first performance. Both of the poems Jonson wrote on his children's deaths imagine them conventionally enough in a painless afterlife. Benjamin has "so soon 'scaped world's and flesh's rage, / And if no other misery, yet age" (7-8); Mary has "parted hence / With safety of her innocence" (5-6). The precise nature of that innocence and safety emerges in the second half of the poem: "heaven's queen, whose name she bears" places the six-month-old's soul "amongst her virgin-train" (7-9). Mary is freed of the burden of sexuality and reproduction, of "bearing" more than a virginal name. Likewise, part of the "rage" Jonson's seven-year-old Benjamin escapes seems to be paternity: "Oh, could I lose all father now!" (5). Oddly, Jonson almost never imagines earthly parents' eventual reunion with their children after death. Perhaps he can't imagine an adult worthy of heaven. The world is corrupting—to grow older is to grow morally unfit. Jonsonian drama is full of negative exempla. If all Jonson's work truly has the didactic aim of "mix[ing] profit, with your pleasure," as *Volpone*'s prologue protests (8), it teaches the audience not what to do, but what not to do. Safety lies in childlike passivity and inaction.

In the 1631 "Elegy on the Lady Jane Pawlet, Marchioness of Winton," we see Jonson's repetition and elaboration of the type of heaven, and the type of filiation, that *Volpone* represents more obliquely. Jonson can hardly "[s]ound . . . her virtues, give her

soul a name," he says, because "[i]t is too near of kin to heaven, the soul, / To be described."[31] Heaven is a place for which detail is inappropriate. Pawlet died in childbirth, but not once does the 101-line elegy allude to the cause of her death, the fate of her child, or any other children she may have left behind. The filial dynamic this chapter describes appears not to be limited to men; Jonson wholly subordinates Pawlet's motherhood to her daughterhood. For that matter, he initially subordinates her identity to her father's. The opening couplet certainly invites curiosity: "What gentle ghost, besprent with April dew, / Hails me, so solemnly, to yonder yew?" But Jonson doesn't get around to telling us the ghost's name and title for seventeen more lines, and he tells us offhandedly and even impatiently, as if the information were tedious to know and relay: "She was the Lady Jane, and Marchioness / Of Winchester; the heralds can tell this" (19-20). What is established more quickly than Pawlet's name is her daughterly credentials: "Whose daughter? ha? Great Savage of the Rock?" (10).[32] The poem answers the question three syllables after asking it. But Savage, who is "good as great" (note the echo of Jonson's description of God in "To Heaven" above), remains as nondescript as heaven. Or Celia, or the divine "Original" or "Maker" who turns out to be Pawlet's more important father in a more important heavenly "home" (11, 65, 74). In heaven, Pawlet's "mortality / Became her birthday to eternity!" (68-69): she is born again, once more a child. She achieves the stainless youth of the dead Salathiel Pavy,

. . . a child that did so thrive

31. Jonson, "Elegy on the Lady Jane Pawlet," in *Ben Jonson*, ed. Ian Donaldson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), ll. 22, 29-30. Subsequent citations are parenthetical.

32. Rock Savage was the family's manor house.

In grace and feature,

As Heaven and Nature seemed to strive

Which owned the creature.

(5-8)

Pawlet also calls to mind the benign filiality of the 1629 Cary-Morison Ode's young Sir Henry Morison, a "perfect patriot, and a noble friend, / But most, a virtuous son."[33] "It is not growing like a tree / . . . doth make man better be," the Ode continues; "in short measures, life may perfect be" (65-66, 74).

The only relevant reunion in the afterlife is of a child with the Heavenly Father. Jonson is part of a broader seventeenth-century representation of God and heaven in this as well as in the blandness of his paradise. In 1656, the Puritan diarist Alice Thornton described her eighteen-month-old daughter's last words in a way that makes the slippage between father and God in *Volpone* seem slight by comparison: "When Mr. Thornton and I came to pray for her, she held up those sweete eyes and hands to her deare Father in heaven, looked up, and cryed in her language, 'Dad, dad, dad' with such vemency as if inspired by her holy Father in heaven to deliver her sweet soule into her heavenly Father's hands."[34] The replacement of Mr. Thornton's paternity by God's might appear more than kin and less than kind, but Thornton is so invested in the notion of God as father that she cannot see the possibility that her child wants to be held by the earthly

33. Jonson," "To the Immortal Memory and Noble Friendship of that Immortal Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison," in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ll. 46-47. Subsequent citations are parenthetical.

34. Alice Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton, of East Newton, Co. York*, ed. Charles Jackson (Durham: Surtees Society, 1875), 94-95.

parent instead. In a Dryden elegy for the twenty-five-year-old Anne Killigrew, Killigrew is likewise a "virgin-daughter of the skies" (1). As is the case in *Volpone*, a desire for abstract filiation trumps the actual parent.

Jonson poetry's sentimentality about the young is anticipated, perhaps made inevitable, by cynicism about the old. Not only does life grow stale; its livers do too. Jonson coldly if amusingly sums up a hypothetical octogenarian in a counterexample to Morison's well-timed exit: "How well at twenty had he fall'n or stood! / For three of his fourscore he did no good" (31-32). Perhaps even Morison, dead at twenty-one, has outlasted his best time. The Ode opens with Pliny's infant of Saguntum, born only to return to the womb to die once he sees the Second Punic War beginning.[35] In the Pawlet elegy, and in *Volpone*, Jonson figures multiple infants of Saguntum trying to retreat—to the father. But the juxtaposition of the various texts raises a puzzling question. If by dint of their youth Jonsonian children are better than aged and corrupt parents, why do his characters pursue filiation rather than paternity? One tempting hypothesis: greed for virtue. Filiation brings with it the quintessentially Jonsonian pleasure of moral superiority. Bonario's filial correctness when he gives way to his father in court, for instance, veers toward the showy: "Sir, I will sit down, / And rather wish my innocence should suffer, / Than I resist the authority of a father" (4.5.112-14). And Mosca's 1.1 flattery of Volpone suggests that Volpone includes the lust for notable virtue among his

35. Sermin Meskill associates Jonson's use of the Saguntum story with other early modern reproductive problems—namely those figured in *Richard II* and in the difficulties of monarchical succession ("'Sorrow's dismal heir': Monstrous Succession in *Richard II*," *Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Anglo-Américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles* 59 (November 2004): 95-109, 100.

other desires. Volpone takes money from fortunehunters in lieu of preying on actual heirs until they die in debtors' prisons, their families suffering: "You loathe the widow's, or the orphan's tears / Should wash your pavements; or their piteous cries / Ring in your roofs" (49-51). This loathing of others' pain, of course, also involves the loathing of their presence.

The representation of fathers as morally inferior would seem to fit oddly with the conflation of the paternal and the divine. But in *Volpone*—and especially for Volpone himself—divinity and goodness are separate categories. When Celia calls on a "just God," Volpone's reply is "in vain" (3.8.265). The divine is what is powerful, what goes beyond usual limits, what lasts. His earlier comparison of himself to Jove (221) is perhaps a rivalry with the divine like Bonario's potential rivalry with an aged and corrupt parent. No matter the motivations, Jonson links filiation to a blissful afterworld in the language of Corvino and the courtroom as well as in his poetry. Corvino, swearing "by heaven" at 3.7.118, offers a related exclamation in the same scene: "Heart of my father!" (90). In *Volpone,* the two expressions serve the same function—heaven is where the Father is. Volpone's rapid reconciliation to losing Celia is enabled only by his presence in court—the paternal quadrumvirate there trumps what she can offer.[36] *Volpone*'s association of the law with fatherhood has a parallel in one of the traditional functions of the Inns of Court; one scholar writes that "[n]ot one of the least items of expenditure at the Temple is that for the maintenance of children abandoned there." The Inns paid for

36. Mario DiGangi reads Volpone's ready acceptance of Celia's loss as a reflection of the more primarily homoerotic aspects of the play. See DiGangi, "Asses and Wits: The Homoerotics of Mastery in Satiric Comedy," *English Literary Renaissance* 25, no. 2 (1995): 179-208.

wet-nurses, and more often than not, as Frederick Inderwick's Calendar of the Inner Temple Records reports, for "graves-diggin[g] for . . . nurse children" later.[37] And the paternal *avocatori* cannot be distinguished. Their very colorlessness and disembodiment are partly what gives them authority, just as Celia's blankness is what makes her inviting. And the *avocatori* are imaginary fathers for everyone. What follows is only a partial list of the paternal addresses in the courtroom scenes: "Your fatherhoods' fit pleasures be obeyed" (4.5.22), "most honoured fathers" (29, 93), "fatherhoods" (49, 70, 87, 117), "fathers" (80, 98, 143), "grave fathers" (145), "honoured fathers" (4.6.35), "my honoured fathers" (43), "grave fatherhoods" (23, 44), "We thank your fatherhoods" (63). In this courtroom context the term "fatherhoods" is both customary and strategic, as Alvin Kernan and then Watson note, but when the judges send Celia back "[h]ome, to her father" (5.12.144), that fate seems the one Volpone, in his inevitable path toward the room of legal fathers, aims at too.[38]

Celia, then, is Volpone's filial escape dream. Under domestic confinement, just as he is, her very name signals other possibilities—a flight away into the heaven referenced in the first scene of the play and several times thereafter. The vast and timeless space of the afterlife constitutes an escape from the unities of time and space that circumscribe the play, as well as a substitution of a divine father and filiation for the discontents of paternity and the inadequacies of patriarchs earthly, legal, and literary. The play briefly imagines heirship to be as suffocating as paternity; to prove her modesty to Corvino,

37. A. Wigfall Green, *The Inns of Court and Early English Drama* (1931; reprint, New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), 37; Inderwick quoted in Green 38.

38. See Watson, ed, notes, 4.5.13.

Celia volunteers her incarceration: "lock me up, for ever; / Make me the heir of darkness" (3.7.26). But Celia's actual fate is one the play as a whole envies. The *avocatori* are unideal fathers only for Mosca, since they ultimately both unhouse him and keep him away from the liberating heavens, the airy freedom he rejoices in at 3.1. Their judgment:

> You appear
> To have been the chiefest minister, if not plotter,
> In all these lewd impostures; and now, lastly,
> Have, with your impudence, abused the court,
> And habit of a gentleman of Venice,
> Being a fellow of no birth or blood;
> For which, our sentence is, first thou be whipped;
> Then live perpetual prisoner in our galleys.
>
> (107-114)

The "which" at 113 is ambiguous. Most logically, it refers to all that precedes it. But it immediately follows "no birth or blood"; if we read the syntax more narrowly, Mosca is punished for a lack of filiation. Volpone, "[b]y blood and rank a gentleman, canst not fall / Under like censure" (117-18). Patrimony is a partial escape.

Though not quite a good enough one. In language that recalls *The Tempest*'s "cramps" and imprisonments, Volpone must "lie in prison, cramped with irons" until he "be'st sick and lame indeed" (123-24). In the imprisonment, Jonson returns Volpone to the enclosure that chafes him at the start of the play, making *Volpone* itself a loop.

"[A]lmost everything Jonson wrote attempts in one way or another to complete the broken circle," Greene wrote in his discussion of Jonson's *impresa* of the broken compass and the motto *Deest quod duceret orbem*. But though this is true of *Volpone*'s movement toward domestic safety, the play has so many images of unwelcome enclosure that the circle must be a more ambivalent trope than Greene suggests.[39] *The Tempest*, too, writes circularity as limitation: "our little life / Is rounded with a sleep" (4.1.157-58). Neither play quite escapes that confinement. In the epilogue, Prospero must urge the audience to "set [him] free" (20). Prospero's and Volpone's little spaces ultimately suggest not just the cramping experience of paternity, but the finite space—and time—of the body.

Various readers have objected to the unexpected severity of *Volpone*'s circular punishments. They seem too obviously to let the audience have its cake and eat it too, taking pleasure in every manipulation and feeling righteous at the end. But this is only true of Mosca's penalty. For the gentleman of blood and rank—a favored heir not only of a particular person, but more abstractly, of the state—the sentence is only temporary. Jonson draws another loop, bringing Volpone back onstage to deliver an epilogue. In this, the play's conclusion is no mismatch to its earlier moral leniency. It replicates Volpone's earlier trickery, pretending to augur his death only for him to reappear once again, newly vital. With the play's ending, Jonson makes readers into his appreciative gulls, would-be heirs to be tricked as we seek a moral fortune.

39. See Greene, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self," 194.

Conclusion

This dissertation examines how Jonson and Shakespeare represent early modern concepts of paternity and filiation as sometimes reinforcing, sometimes combating, and always complicating other early modern discourses of reproduction and continuity. But it leaves several questions unanswered. Why does this particular combination of period and form rely on stories of lost children, dead fathers, mourning twins? Two hypotheses: first, the traditional conventions of theater make it more mimetic of human relationships than other literary forms are. Second, widespread illiteracy created an audience for drama that was almost certainly more diverse than the audience for other genres.[1] This diversity might have led companies to perform plays centering on themes common to audiences of widely varying backgrounds. Representations of family relationships must have been easier sell to more people than, for example, the descriptions of specific trades we get in the prose fictions of Thomas Deloney and Thomas Nashe or the courtly in-jokes so frequent in Tudor and Cavalier lyrics.

Those explanations, though, do not account for gendered discourses of parenting, different for mothers and others. With the exception of some Lacanian work, one of the frequent assumptions behind psychoanalytic theory is that the mother, much more than

1. Even if one accepts the conclusions of Ann Jennalie Cook's *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), whose insistence on a privileged theater audience is moderated by Andrew Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), it seems logical to assume that written material would have been limited to an even more privileged audience.

the father, is central to the child's and eventually the adult's psychic development. But some of those ideas may need redirection for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, Dorothy Dinnerstein's and Nancy Chodorow's argument that misogyny results from male need for individuation against a powerful maternal backdrop may be flipped for early moderns.[2] Perhaps the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century misandry of the sort represented in *The Merchant of Venice* may follow from a converse need to separate from men, who wielded authority over early modern children not only as fathers but also as tutors and masters, ministers and priests. And if the resemblance to the mother is bodily, "natural" (regardless of the freight of those terms), the comparative bodily remoteness and abstraction of paternity means that with regard to fathers, filiation is about emulation, a more deliberate and self-conscious act that inspires meditations on similarly incorporeal social constructions.

In the plays this dissertation examines, the most powerful constructions related to paternity are law and religion. Like filiation, law is an imitative form of cultural and historical coherence. Along with the humanist education that structured Renaissance learning, the common law relies on precedent, just as father-child transmission does.[3] *Every Man in His Humour* in particular offers a dream of the law as father. Different

2. See Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and The Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (1976; New York: Other Press, 1999), and Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, updated edition (1978; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

3. Though as John McDiarmid reminds me, "[h]umanist imitation is emulation, the production of something new out of precursors; common law has the myth of following precedent, not changing it. . . . That is what sets [humanists] apart from medieval conceptions of a timeless order of being, to which common law is still related even if with many qualifications" (John F. McDiarmid, e-mail message to author, April 25, 2008).

from other forms of cultural reproduction in its relative fixity, law promises a predictable stability that eludes Jonson's emulative humanism in the play. Jonson's unease with the unpredictability of emulation both humanist and filial is in part what gives *Every Man In* its darker shadows; the play's treatment of legal patriarchy, on the other hand, is strictly comic. Law is a complex institution in *Every Man In*, represented not only by a justice but by a bailiff and a clerk too. That complexity, backed up by physical force, assuages for Kno'well, and perhaps for Jonson as well, the anxiety of both influence and influencing.

Volpone moves beyond Jonson's customary if somewhat ironized admiration for the legal world to offer the law as a replacement for the institution of domestic fatherhood. The play's conclusion may not be sanguine about biological generation, but the reliance on legal patriarchy that appears in *Every Man In* makes its return: the avocatori are addressed as "fathers" continually, even in contexts where any sort of vocative seems unnecessary. "Grave fathers," in fact, is the phrase Voltore and Volpone most commonly use (it appears in the scene five times), the adjective hinting as much at the imminent death the avocatori dole out and at father Corbaccio's end ("Thou shalt be learned to die well" [5.12.133]) as it does at their seriousness. However ambivalent *Volpone*'s faith in legal paternity is, though, courtroom filiation is all that is left when biological fatherhood and master-servant relationships collapse. Jonson's "grave fathers" produce death rather than birth, though in a purification rite that maintains social stability.

The latest Jonson play I discuss, *The Staple of News*, turns away from law more conclusively. Reversing *Every Man In*'s dynamic, with its grandfatherly justice mocking Old Kno'well, *Staple*'s Senior is a self-appointed and otherwise deluded judge who would create common law; only Father Canter's intervention saves him and his canine victims. Whereas in the earliest play the judge certifies the father-son unit, in the last play the legal world is only made functional by that unit. It is filial continuity that represents, if not truth, then at least the eternal. For Jonson the two are almost the same.

With the exception of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare is much more likely than Jonson to figure law as intruding in processes of generational transmission and disrupting parent-child harmony, as the examples of *The Comedy of Errors*, *Richard II*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Winter's Tale*, and to some degree *The Merchant of Venice* suggest. As law is in the Jonson trio, so are religion and the supernatural are in the Shakespeare—a repeated theme dealing with overarching systems of behavioral codes, moralistic in Jonson, less so in Shakespeare. The interwoven representations of paternity and established religion in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Twelfth Night* become representations of paternity and the supernatural in the romance. And just as *Every Man In* posits a fantasy of law that *Volpone* refines—and undermines—and that *Staple* deconstructs altogether (witness Jonson's continued querying of the term "just," both in *Staple* and "On My First Son"), Shakespeare's body of work eventually renounces

religious faith.[4] It does so first in *Merchant*'s intimidating Judaism and hypocritical Christianity, then in *Twelfth Night*'s more subtly referenced Catholicism, mournful and aestheticized, and finally in *The Tempest*'s various abjurations and suspensions of belief. Monotheism vanishes altogether in the last play, replaced by a dead witch and multiple spirits and deities who do the bidding of a conjuror who plans to give them up. Both playwrights, then, end up casting off these systems of cultural transmission in favor of more intimate domestic structures.

The religious connections between the earliest and latest Shakespeare plays I discuss might have seemed obvious to some of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Playgoers, according to Philip Stubbes' 1583 *Anatomy of Abuses*, also frequented "Satan's Synagogues, to worship devils and betray Jesus Christ."[5] In their eschewal of Christianity, the phrasing implies, Jews and witches were one and the same. But the progression from Judaism to witchcraft in this project's selective Shakespearean trajectory is gradual. Perhaps it is because religion loses its importance from the earlier plays to *The Tempest*, the possibility of afterlife removed, that the confrontation with mortality becomes more frank. *The Tempest* has no choice but to reconcile with the body; it suggests that the temporary physical world is all there is. "[T]he great globe itself, / Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve, / And like this insubstantial pageant faded, / Leave not a rack behind" (4.1.153-56). The Puritan "Yea" notwithstanding, the passage

4. On "just" in *Staple*, see the discusion on pp. 132-33 above. Also see "On My First Son," in *Ben Jonson and the Cavalier Poets*, ed. Hugh Maclean (New York: Norton, 1974): " . . . I thee pay, / Exacted by thy fate, on the just day" (ll. 3-4).

5. Philip Stubbes cited in Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), 181.

testifies to an utter lack of faith in a world after death. So the relationship with the father's body, which forecasts everyone's decline, is more explicitly tangled in the play. As with *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest* fantasizes intellectual reproduction—in this case, the mental imitation of bodily powers that constitutes Prospero's magic, along with the maternal metaphors he adopts. Those metaphors substitute words for the body even as they bespeak a longing for the physical. But if even more fanciful than comedy in its plotting, romance is more realistic in its psychology. The magical fantasy is given up. The parent's body, in all its vulnerability and limitations, is accepted.

In the romances, Shakespeare would seem to care more than Jonson about human desire rather than human actuality, the possible rather than the real. But oddly enough, the presence of divinity in cynical *Volpone* seems more genuine than its presence in *The Tempest*. Ceres, Juno, and Iris appear in the play only briefly, and Jove and Neptune are mentioned only as tools controlled by Prospero. As Santayana argued, in general Shakespeare seems an atheist.[6] That rejection of the idea of a divine afterlife makes *The Tempest*'s rapprochement with the body necessary in a way that it is not for Jonson. The Jonsonian father remains abstract, even more so in *The Staple of News* than in *Every Man in His Humour* and *Volpone*. As Jonson's life and his personal writings make plain, he is devout. For him, the body *can* be transcended.

But just as *Every Man In* is more distrustful of doubling than *Twelfth Night*, Jonson's plays are more ambivalent about paternity than Shakespeare's. He participates

6. See George Santayana, "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare," in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1896; Charleston: BiblioLife, 2009), 147-165. On Shakespeare's atheism, also see Eric Mallin, *Godless Shakespeare* (London: Continuum, 2007).

in a paradoxically anti-mimetic version of the Renaissance. More ironic still is that despite Jonson's resistance to imitation, he rather than Shakespeare appears to be the playwright more emulated by Restoration successors. In its alternately malicious and genial urbanity, the literature of the Restoration feels far less Shakespearean than Jonsonian. Despite that resemblance, in 1668 John Dryden wrote the following summation: "*Shakespeare* was the *Homer*, or Father of our Dramatick Poets; *Johnson* was the *Virgil*, the pattern of elaborate writing."[7] Dryden assigns Shakespeare the paternal identity Shakespeare's later work itself has as its primary emotional reference point. His characterization of Jonson is more subtly telling. Both in the Virgil link and in the return of the "h" to the surname, a paternal spelling Jonson had rejected at age thirty-two, the Jonsonian successor reasserts Jonson's status as a son.[8] Dryden demonstrates precisely the legatee's revision and intrusion so feared in *Every Man in His Humour* and *Volpone*. But the description fulfills a Jonsonian desire too: to be granted, by a son who isn't one, a bodiless filiation.

7. John Dryden, *An Essay Of Dramatick Poesie*, in *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), 11:516.

8. David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4.

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Vita

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